NATION

Ranjith accused of sexually assaulting actor

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BUSINESS

Centre gives ₹3.66L cr to state governments

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SPORTS

Coco Gauff digs deep to beat Elina Svitolina

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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H'yana polls now on 5 Oct, results with J&K on 8 Oct

EC revises date to accommodate Bishnoi community's festival

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Election Commission on Saturday deferred the Haryana Assembly poll date to 5 October from 1 October, keeping in mind a centuries-old festival Guru Jambheshwar of the Bishnoi community.

The counting of votes for Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana Assembly polls will now be held on 8 October instead of 4 October, the poll body said.

The EC had received a representation from the National President of All India Bishnoi Mahasabha, Bikaner, Rajasthan for rescheduling the date for the Haryana Assembly elections.

He said generations of families from Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana visit their native village Mukam in Rajasthan on 'amavas' in the month of 'Asoj' for the annual festival in Bikaner in the memory of Guru Jambheshwar.

This year, the festival falls on 2 October and thousands of Bishnoi families residing in Sirsa, Fatehabad and Hisar will be travelling to Rajasthan on the day, denying them their voting rights.

Separately, ruling BJP and the opposition INLD in Haryana had urged the EC to revise the polling date keeping in mind the long weekend which might result in poor voter turnout as people tend to go out on extended weekends.

Families from these districts are expected to start their journey on October 1, he said.

In the past too, EC has adjusted election dates keeping in mind the sentiments of various communities.

EC had postponed the 2022 Punjab elections by a week to accommodate devotees travelling to Varanasi for Guru Ravidas Jayanthi.

Similarly, the commission changed the dates for the 2022 Manipur polls to respect the Christian community's Sunday prayers. In the 2023 Rajasthan Assembly elections, it rescheduled polling as it was originally scheduled to be held on Devuthani Ekadashi, a day significant for mass weddings in Rajasthan. —*PTI*

EC had postponed the 2022 Punjab elections by a week to accommodate devotees travelling to Varanasi for Guru Ravidas Jayanthi **PHOTO: PTI**

- This year, the festival falls on 2 October and thousands of Bishnoi families residing in Sirsa, Fatehabad and Hisar will be travelling to Rajasthan on the day.

1ST INDIAN WOMAN

India gets 5th Para medal as Rubina bags Bronze

CHATEAROUX, 31 AUG

Rubina Francis shot down India's fourth medal from the shooting range, showing tremendous calm and composure in a high-class field to clinch a bronze in the women's 10m air pistol SH1 event in the Paris Paralympics on Saturday.

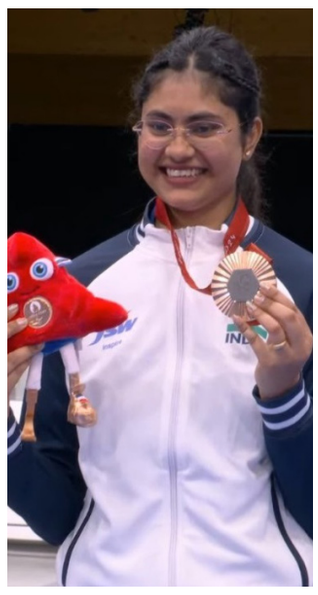
Competing in a top-class field consisting of the defending champion and world record holder among others, the 25-year-old Rubina held her own to score a total of 211.1 for a third-place finish in the eight-woman final. She had qualified for the final at seventh spot in the qualification round earlier in the day.

Iran's Javanmardi Sareh won her third successive Paralympics gold with a total score of 236.8 while world record holder Ozgan Aysel of Turkey took the silver with 231.1 in a fierce competition between the two favourites.

Rubina's medal was India's fourth in shooting and fifth overall at the Paris Paralympics. She is India's first woman pistol shooter to win a Paralympics medal. In SH1 class, athletes are able to hold their gun without difficulty and shoot from a standing or sitting position in a wheelchair or chair.

Born into a lower-middle-class family, Rubina faced the added obstacle of leg dysfunction. Her father Simon, initially a mechanic, struggled to support her growing passion for shooting due to financial constraints. Her shooting journey began in 2015 as her determination and her father's tireless efforts led her to Gun for Glory Academy -- founded by Gagan Narang -- in 2017.

She was competing in her second Paralympics, having finished seventh in the final in Tokyo three years ago. —*PTI*



Rubina Francis' medal was India's fourth in shooting and fifth overall at the Paris Paralympics. **PHOTO: PTI**

NORTHEAST WINS DURAND CUP

NorthEast United FC players and others pose for a group photo with the tournament trophy during the presentation ceremony after winning the Durand Cup 2024 final between Mohun Bagan Super Giant and NorthEast United FC at Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan, in Kolkata on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI** ***>>>More on Page 4***

RESIDENCE OF BJP LEADER ATTACKED IN MANIPUR

IMPHAL, 31 AUG

Unidentified miscreants on Saturday set on fire the ancestral residence of Manipur BJP spokesperson Michael Lamjathang in Churachandpur district, police said.

A car parked in the compound of the house at Peniel village in Tuibong sub-division was also torched during the attack. The house came under attack last week too.

Churachandpur district Deputy Commissioner Dharun Kumar S has written a letter to the district Superintendent of Police to conduct an "enquiry" and submit a report at the earliest, police added. Chief Minister N Biren Singh condemned the attack on the house "for the third time". —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

NIA nabs Hizb-ut-Tahrir case accused from KIA

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested a key accused involved in an international conspiracy to radicalise youngsters and establish an Islamic caliphate in India, an official statement said on Saturday.

It said Aziz Ahamed alias Aziz Ahmed alias Jaleel Aziz Ahmed was nabbed on Friday at the City international airport while trying to flee abroad.

According to the NIA statement, the arrest was made in a case registered by the agency against six people influenced by the extremist, radical and fundamental ideology of the Hizb-ut-Tahrir -- an international pan-Islamist and fundamentalist organisation fighting to establish an Islamic caliphate and enforce the constitution written by its founder Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani.

As per the NIA investigation, the accused had "conducted secret Bayaans, where many participants, particularly gullible youth, were radicalised with ideologies of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, which seeks military assistance (Nusra) from forces inimical to India to achieve its nefarious goal". Aziz Ahamed was found to be one of the chief initiators in conducting secret 'Bayaans', the NIA said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

- As per the NIA investigation, the accused had "conducted secret Bayaans, where many participants, particularly gullible youth, were radicalised".

TN CM inks pact with Google to train 2M in AI

CHENNAI, 31 AUG

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin visited the offices of Apple, Google and Microsoft and discussed opportunities for investment and partnerships with them. Day 2 of his US visit led to the signing of a pact to skill two million youngsters in the state in AI under the 'Naan Mudhalvan' scheme, in partnership with Google. The Chief Minister, currently on a visit to the USA to attract investments to Tamil Nadu, on Saturday described the visit to the offices of Apple, Google and Microsoft as "awe-inspiring." —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 7

India's August rainfall 16% higher than normal: IMD

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

India recorded around 16 per cent more rainfall than normal in August, with rainfall over Northwest India recorded at 253.9 mm, the second highest in August since 2001, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Saturday. IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the country recorded 287.1 mm of rainfall in August, compared to the normal 248.1 mm. Meanwhile India is likely to experience above normal rainfall in September, with heavy to very heavy precipitation expected in northwest India. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Farmers to hold mahapanchayat on 15 and 22 Sep

SHAMBHU BORDER, 31 AUG

Farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher claimed that the farmer's agitation has been going on since 13 February in Delhi and they are going to have a mahapanchayat in Jind on 15 September and in Pipli on 22 September. Pandher also alleged Centre for misusing central agencies and as the election is scheduled in Haryana, BJP is scared of the farmer's protest. Farmers are protesting near Shambhu and have been camping there since 13 February. Pandher said, "Delhi agitation has been going on since 13th February. Attempts were made to crush this agitation, forces were deployed, 433 and around 70,000 paramilitary personnel were deployed in Haryana...This agitation has become a headache for BJP," —*ANI*

>>>More on Page 4

47 Indians rescued from Laos cyber scam centre

VIENTIANE, 31AUG

At least 47 Indians trapped in cyber scam centres in Laos have been rescued from the Bokeo province of the country, the Indian embassy in the Southeast Asian country said on Saturday.

Indian authorities have been cautioning its nationals against fake job offers in Laos and urged them to conduct thorough due diligence to avoid being deceived. The Indian mission has so far rescued 635 Indians from the country and ensured their safe return to India.

"Of these, 29 were handed over to the Embassy by Laos authorities after their crackdown on illegal activities in Golden Triangle SEZ, while other 18 had approached the Embassy in distress, seeking help," the statement, which was posted on X, said.

It said the embassy officials travelled from the capital Vientiane to Bokeo to liaise with local authorities for their rescue.

The embassy has undertaken and completed all procedural requirements of Laos authorities for their repatriation to India, the statement said, adding that 30 of those have already safely returned to India or are on their way. —*PTI*

Indian authorities have been cautioning its nationals against fake job offers in Laos **PHOTO: X/@INDIANEMBLAOS**

AS PEOPLE WATCHED

Elderly man assaulted on train over suspicion of carrying beef

MUMBAI, 31 AUG

An elderly man was allegedly assaulted by his co-passengers in an express train near Igatpuri in Maharashtra's Nashik district on suspicion that he was carrying beef, the Government Railway Police (GRP) said on Saturday.

The man was slapped and abused repeatedly on the moving train by his co-passengers while dozens watched the horror unfold in front of them but did nothing to help the man.

The GRP has initiated a probe after a video of the alleged incident, which took place earlier this week, surfaced on social media, an official said.

According to the GRP, the victim, Haji Ashraf Munyar, a resident of Jalgaon district, was travelling to his daughter's house in Kalyan when he was beaten up by his co-passengers.

The disturbing video, filled with expletives, shows nearly a dozen men interrogating Ashraf Munyar over a meat-like substance in two big plastic boxes that he was carrying: "What are you carrying? Where are you going? Where are you from? Don't you get goats there? How many people are going to eat it?"

The man said that he was taking the meat for his daughter's family.

Dissatisfied by Munyar's response of taking the meat for his daughter's family, one of the men said:

"We will know about it (the kind of meat) once we get it tested. It is sawan season. It's our festival and you are doing this."

"We have taken cognisance of the video and identified the victim. Some of the people involved in the attack have also been identified, and a probe is on," the official said, adding that no case has been registered so far. —*Agencies*

The man was slapped and abused repeatedly on the moving train by his co-passengers **PHOTOS: SCREENGRAB**

We will know about it (the kind of meat) once we get it tested. It is sawan season. It's our festival and you are doing this.

-Train passengers who assaulted the man

5 held for lynching scrap dealer for 'eating' beef

CHANDIGARH, 31 AUG

Five people, who are part of a cow vigilante group, have been arrested for allegedly beating a migrant worker who was a scrap dealer from West Bengal to death in Haryana's Charkhi Dadri district over suspicion that he had eaten beef, police said on Saturday.

According to a senior police officer, the deceased Sabir Malik was killed on 27 August.

Suspecting that the victim had eaten beef, the accused -- Abhishek, Mohit, Ravinder, Kamaljit and Sahil -- called Malik at a shop under the pretense of selling empty plastic bottles and then beat him, the officer said.

He added that after some people intervened, the accused took Malik to another location and beat him again, leading to his death.

Malik lived in a shanty near Bandhra village in Charkhi Dadri district and collected waste and rag for a living, the police said.

All the five accused have been arrested, they said, adding that two juveniles have also been apprehended in the matter. —*PTI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, DyCM DK Shivakumar, ministers, MPs, MLAs and other party workers stage a sit-in demonstration near Gandhi statue on the Vidhana Soudha premises in Bengaluru on Saturday **PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD**

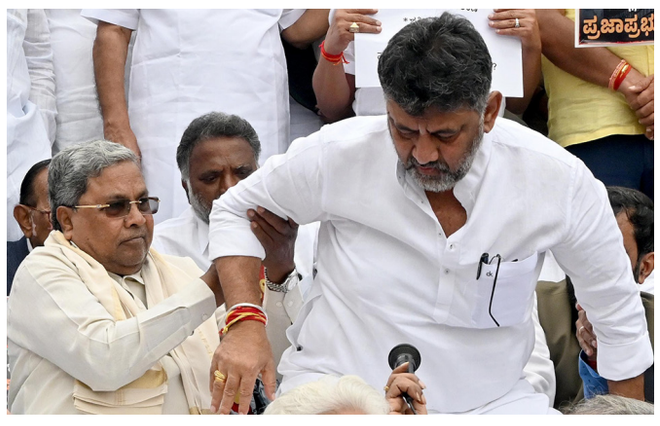
Cong stages march against 'misuse' of Guv office

Party leaders submit memorandum to Thaawarchand Gehlot, demand nod for prosecution against HDK, others

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday said 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' march was organised by Congress to protest against the alleged misuse of the office of Governor.

"We organised 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' not on behalf of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. The matter is in the court of law," said Shivakumar, who is the Congress Karnataka unit president. "This 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' is to make sure that the Governor's office should not become an office of a party. We are going there (Raj Bhavan) with a demand to protect the sanctity of this constitutional post," he said.



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with DCM DK Shivakumar during 'Raj Bhavan Chalo' march in Bengaluru on Saturday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Shivakumar lamented that there were many pending petitions, seeking permission to prosecute some individuals, with the Governor. Holding placards, banners, posters and raising slogans condemning Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, the Congress leaders led by Shivakumar took out a march, which saw the participation of ministers, Congress MLAs and MPs. Later, they handed over a memorandum to Gehlot.

In their memorandum, the Congress leaders demanded the grant of sanction for prosecution against Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy, former ministers G Janardhana Reddy, Shashikala Jolle, Murugesh Nirani and others under Section 19 of Prevention of Corruption Act and Section 218 BNSS (197 CrPC), as sought for by Lokayukta police.

They also asked for prior approval under Section 17A of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (Amendment Act, 2018) as sought for by Lokayukta police. The party also demanded that there should be an end to the "abuse of the office of Governor and to stop acting on political considerations."

The people of Karnataka will not tolerate a Governor who fails to uphold the principles of justice and democracy, Congress said. "As the Governor, your role is to uphold the Constitution and ensure that justice is administered without fear or favour. We urge you to demonstrate impartiality in your decisions and to dispel the growing concerns of political bias," he added.

Earlier, Siddaramaiah, his cabinet colleagues, Congress MLAs and MPs staged a sit-in demonstration near the Gandhi statue on the Vidhana Soudha premises here. *—PTI*

Guv not dependent on ministers' advice on claims against CM: SG

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

Governor is not supposed to depend on the aid and advice of council of ministers when there are allegations against Chief Minister, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said on Saturday.

Mehta appeared on behalf of Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot before Justice M Nagaprasanna in High Court after Chief Minister Siddaramaiah filed a petition seeking to quash the approval granted by Gehlot to investigate and prosecute him in the alleged site allotment scam in Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

The court has posted the matter to Monday.

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot **PHOTO: ANI**

Mehta said the Governor can only say that prima facie criminal offences are made out but the investigating officer will finally decide the provision under which charge-sheet will be filed. Section 17(A) of the Prevention of Corruption Act says that no police officer shall conduct an inquiry or investigation into any offence alleged to have been committed by a public servant under this act. It does not talk of Bharat Nyaya Sanhita or Indian Penal Code, Mehta said.

If charge sheet is filed, the investigating officer will take his own decision based on the material of the record detailing the provisions attracted for specific charges, he said.

"As a Governor I have to see whether the complaint and the documents which are placed makes out a cognizable offence which requires investigation. It may result in a charge sheet or the report under 173 as we call it or a closure report as per the old section 169; but that's not the call the Governor is permitted also to take," the SG said. *—PTI*

Woman held for cheating men on pretext of marriage

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 31 AUG

Chikkaballapur police have arrested a woman accused of defrauding multiple men by promising marriage and then extorting money from them. Raghavendra of Gauribidanuru filed a complaint on 23 August alleging that a woman named Komala had cheated him. Raghavendra, a widower, through a matrimony app came in contact with Komala, who cheated him of Rs 7.4 lakh. During their investigation, the team discovered that Komala had targeted and cheated several other men. ***-Salar News***

70 motorists held for drunken driving in City

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

In a major crackdown on traffic violations and drunken driving, City Traffic Police conducted an operation on Friday focusing on drivers under the influence of alcohol, resulting in the arrest of 70 motorists. Bellandur station recorded the highest number of cases against drunk drivers in the City. Traffic police also conducted a drive to address traffic violations, which led to the registration of hundreds of cases for offences such as double parking, black film violations, and no parking. ***-Salar News***

Govt pledges support to City's real-estate sector

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

State government pledged its support to real estate industry in City. During a meeting with Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) Bengaluru on Saturday, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar assured the delegation of the government's commitment to addressing the challenges faced by the sector. Led by CREDAI Bengaluru president Amar Mysore, the delegation presented a memorandum outlining the key concerns. Real estate developers like MR Jaishankar, Executive Chairman of Brigade Group, were among those who attended the meeting. ***-Salar News***

An elephant carcass was discovered by Forest Department officials at Bylur range in Chamarajanagar district on Saturday **PHOTO: SALAR**

3 jumbos found dead in BRT Tiger Reserve in 1 week

MYSURU, 31 AUG

A third elephant carcass was discovered by Forest Department officials at the Bylur range in the BRT Tiger Reserve, Chamarajanagar district, on Saturday. This follows the discovery of two other elephant carcasses earlier in the week.

The first two carcasses were found on 27 August in the Bylur and Yelandur ranges of the reserve. The first elephant, a male estimated to be around 40 years old, was found near Bethalakatte in the Yelandur range during routine patrolling by department officials. It is believed to have died about 20 days ago.

The second elephant, also found on 27 August, was located in the Aladakere forest area of the Bylur range. This male elephant, estimated to be around 57 years old, had been dead for about eight months; its tusks were still intact.

The third carcass, found on Saturday in the Bylur range, is another male elephant that likely died around 20 days ago.

Authorities are waiting for a report from the Forensic Science Laboratory to determine if the elephants died naturally, from contagious diseases, or due to poisoning, said Sripathy, BRT Tiger Reserve Project Director and Deputy Conservator of Forest.

Along with Sripathy, T Heeralal, Conservator of Forest, Chamarajanagar circle; Suresh K, ACF; and other officials visited the spot.

Department Veterinarian Wasim Mirza conducted the postmortem on the three carcasses and officials have collected all the six tusks of the three jumbos which were found on the spot.

–Salar News

NAMMA METRO

BEML unveils prototype making of driverless trains

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

BEML Ltd, a premier rail and metro train set manufacturer in India, inaugurated its prototype manufacturing for driverless metro train sets on Saturday. The manufacturing is part of the 5RS-DM Project, dedicated to the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation's (BMRCL) Lines 2 and 6, including Bangalore Airport Line.

The project, valued at around Rs 3,177 crore, encompasses the design, manufacture, supply, installation, testing, and commissioning of 53 train sets, according to a statement by BMRCL. It also includes maintenance for up to 15 years under Bangalore Metro Rail Project's Phases 2, 2A, and 2B. BEML secured this contract in August 2023.

The new train sets, featuring a 6-car formation, will be built from high-tensile Austenitic stainless steel, ensuring durability and passenger comfort. They will include roof-mounted Saloon Air Conditioners, IP-based Passenger Announcement and Information Systems, and a Passenger Saloon Surveillance System. The trains will also have ergonomically designed stainless-steel seats, Fibre Reinforced Polymer panel interiors, LCD-based Dynamic Route Map display and automatic doors, synchronised with Platform Screen Doors for enhanced safety.

The inauguration was attended by Maheshwar Rao, Managing Director of BMRCL, and Shantanu Roy, Chairman and Managing Director of BEML Ltd. Roy said, "We are privileged to inaugurate this new prototype manufacturing facility in Bengaluru, which is rapidly becoming a hub for India's top metro rail manufacturing."

–Salar News

GBA bill will make way for corruption: Ex-corporator

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill 2024 will modify City's territorial limits and pave way for corruption in public works, said Padmanaba Reddy, ex-corporator of Kadarenahalli ward in the City.

The bill establishes Greater Bengaluru Authority, which will oversee the City's administration and strategic planning. The GBA will be coordinated by Bengaluru Development Minister and include four additional ministers, all City MLAs, and heads of major City agencies such as the Bangalore Development Authority, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board, Bangalore Electricity Supply Company, Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited, and Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation.

–Salar News

Forest and police officials reclaimed more than 350 acres of forest land in the industrial area of Narasapura on Saturday **PHOTO: SALAR**

Rs 1,800 cr worth forest land reclaimed in Kolar

KOLAR, 31 AUG

Forest and police officials reclaimed more than 350 acres of forest land valued at Rs 1,800 crore in the industrial area of Narasapura in Kolar district on Saturday.

Led by Deputy Conservator of Forests Yedukondalu V, the team, equipped with 45 earth-moving equipment, conducted an operation from dawn to dusk and reclaimed forest lands in the villages of Achatnahalli, Kaji Kallahalli and Dodda Ayyuru.

Yedukondalu said during the operation, permanent structures were razed to reclaim the lands. Yedukondalu had taken similar steps in Srinivsapur taluk a few months back and reclaimed encroached forest land. Then Lok Sabha member from Kolar S Muniswamy opposed this move and staged a dharna. However, Yedukondalu stood his ground.

–Salar News

Engine failure: City-bound flight lands back in Kolkata

BENGALURU, 31 AUG

A Bengaluru-bound IndiGo flight had to make an emergency landing at the Kolkata airport minutes after take-off on Friday night due to an engine failure, a senior official said. Flight 6E0573 from Kolkata to Bengaluru, which became airborne at 10.36pm on Friday, made an emergency landing at the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International (NSCBI) airport at 10.53 pm after failure of its left engine, he said. However, no fire or spark was reported, the Airports Authority of India spokesperson said on Saturday. The full emergency declared at 10.39 pm was withdrawn at 11.08 pm, he said. Both the runways at NSCBI airport were handed over to the Air Traffic Control (ATC) to make those available for the plane to land back safely, the spokesperson said. "It was learnt that the left side engine of the aircraft failed after take-off as a result of which it had to come back to Kolkata," he said.

—PTI

GRUHA LAKSHMI SCHEME

Woman uses guarantee fund to set up shop for daughter-in-law

MEGHANA PRASAD
BENGALURU, 31 AUG

In a world where stories of discord between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law often dominate, there emerges an inspiring tale from Neeralagi village in Haveri district.

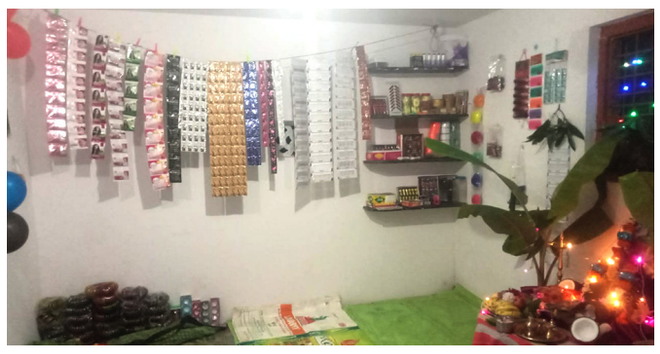
Breaking the stereotype, 50-year-old Dakshayini Patil chose a path of empowerment and support. With the monthly dole she got from State government's Gruha Lakshmi scheme, Dakshayini set up a fancy store for her 23-year-old daughter-in-law, Kumari Shivanagouda Patil, offering not just a means of livelihood but a gesture of trust and care.

Dakshayini, who lives with her husband, son (Shivanagouda Patil), daughter-in-law (Kumari) and two grandchildren, couldn't bear to see her daughter-in-law struggle.

Kumari had been balancing household duties while also working as a labourer on farms to support her family.

Speaking to Salar News, Dakshayini said: "I saw how hard she was working, and I just couldn't stand by and do nothing. I wanted to do something to ease her pain."

With 10 instalments of Gruha Lakshmi scheme funds, totalling Rs 20,000, Dakshaini purchased supplies and set up a shop at their home. The supplies included a variety of ladies' items such as creams and bangles. "I did not want her to suffer like we did and wanted her to have a better life," Dakshayini said.



With the monthly dole she got from State government's Gruha Lakshmi scheme, Dakshayini set up a fancy store for her 23-year-old daughter-in-law, Kumari Shivanagouda, in Haveri district **PHOTOS: SALAR**

The shop was inaugurated on 27 August during the month of Shravan.

Speaking to **Salar News,** Kumari said: "I used to struggle to make ends meet, taking care of my two young children while working on the fields.

But my mother-in-law saw my hardships and decided to help. We are like mother and daughter, and she put her love and trust in me to open this shop."

The Gruha Lakshmi scheme is one of the five guarantee schemes launched by the Karnataka government, which aims to empower women by providing financial assistance to economically disadvantaged households.

—Salar News

PHOTO: PTI

Yechury continues to be under treatment at AIIMS

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary Sitaram Yechury continues to be under treatment at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, for a respiratory infection, the party said on Saturday. Yechury was admitted to the AIIMS on 19 August for treatment of a pneumonia-like chest infection. The exact nature of his ailment was not revealed by the hospital. "Comrade Sitaram Yechury, general secretary of the CPI(M), continues to be under treatment at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences of New Delhi," the CPI(M) said in a statement. "He is under the care of a team of specialist doctors who are treating him for respiratory infection," it said. Yechury had recently undergone cata-ract surgery. *—PTI*

JD(U) suspends J&K Secy for anti-party activities

SRINAGAR, 31 AUG

Janata Dal (United) on Saturday announced the suspension of Jammu and Kashmir general secretary Vivek Bali for allegedly being involved in "anti-party activities". The State party president GM Shaheen took the decision after Bali's recent comments on the alleged release of stone pelters did not align with the party's position in Jammu and Kashmir. Earlier JD(U) stated in a notice that a report regarding the alleged release of stone pelters was incorrectly attributed to the party. "Claims regarding the al-leged release of stone pelters were incorrectly attributed to our party. We would like to clarify that these reports are baseless and do not reflect the offi-cial stance or concerns of our party," the notice read. *—ANI*

RaGa to visit US, interact with Indian diaspora

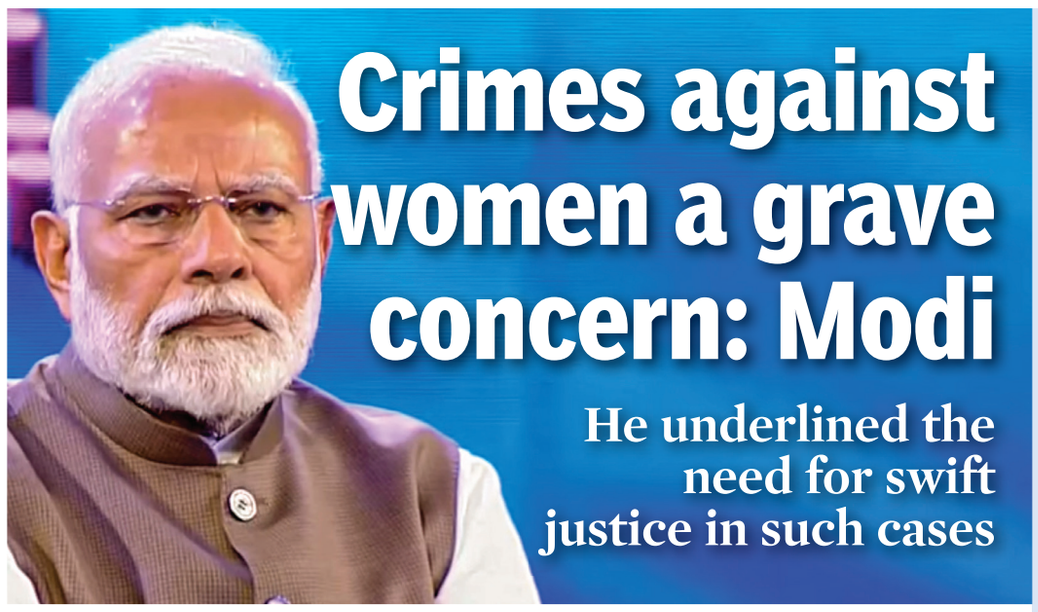
NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

The Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will visit the US from 8-10 September during which he will hold numerous interac-tions in Washington DC and Dallas, including at the University of Texas said Indian Overseas Congress chief Sam Pitroda. "Now, he (Gandhi) is coming to the US for a brief visit. He will be in Dallas on 8 September and Washington DC on 9 and 10 September. In Dallas, we will have interactions with the University of Texas, Indian diaspora, academic institutions and community people. We will have a very large community gathering. We will meet some techno-crats and then will have din-ner with leaders from the Dallas area," he added. *—PTI*

RaGa to hold poll campaign in J&K on 4 Sept: Sources

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is likely to visit Jammu and Kashmir for election campaigning on 4 Sep-tember and hold a pub-lic meeting there. The Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha is expected to visit the Dooru Assembly con-stituency, from where Congress has fielded Ghulam Ahmed Mir, said sources. Congress announced the first list of nine candidates for the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections in a document signed by AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal on 27August. Prominent leader Ghulam Ahmad Mir will contest from Dooru and Vikar Rasool Wani from Banihal. While Peerzada Mohd Syed will contest for the important Anantnag constituency, Sheikh Riaz seeks the Doda seat. *—ANI*



Crimes against women a grave concern: Modi

He underlined the need for swift justice in such cases

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday underlined the need for swift justice in cases involving crimes against women and said that it will give them greater assurance of their safety.

Modi also said the judiciary is considered a guardian of the Constitution, and that the Supreme Court and the judiciary have lived up to the responsibility.

Addressing the inaugural session of a National Conference of the district judiciary in the presence of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, Modi said the people of India have never shown any distrust of the Supreme Court or the judiciary.

Describing the imposition of the Emergency as a "dark" period, he said the judiciary played a key role in upholding fundamental rights.

On matters of national security, Modi said, the judiciary has protected national integrity by keeping national interests paramount.

Against the backdrop of the alleged rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata and the sexual assault on two kindergarten girls in Thane, he said atrocities against women and the safety of children were mat-ters of grave concern for society.

Meanwhile, West Bengal Congress President Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury accused the police of keeping the parents of the doctor who was allegedly raped and murdered under "house arrest".

Chowdhury who visited the house of the deceased doctor and spoke to her parents, also alleged that the police had offered the father money for cremating the body quickly.

PM flags off 3 Vande Bharat trains

Modi flagged on Saturday three new Vande Bharat trains connecting Meerut with Lucknow, Madurai with Bengaluru and Chennai with Nagercoil. Addressing the flag-off ceremony via video conference, Modi said faster growth of southern states is key to achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Bike-borne volunteer held for entering protest area

A civic volunteer of Kolkata Police was arrested on Saturday for allegedly riding into a barricaded area with his motorcycle and injuring one of Rabindra Bharati University students who were holding a demonstration there against the rape and murder of a doctor, a senior officer said.

The incident occurred at 2am. *—PTI*

Chhatra Samaj leader released from custody

KOLKATA, 31 AUG

The Kolkata Police on Saturday released from its custody Chhatra Samaj's Sayan Lahiri, claimed to be one of the organisers of the 27 August march to the West Bengal Secretariat. Acting on a petition by Lahiri's mother Calcutta High Court had on Friday ordered his release from custody. *—PTI*

Shreya Ghoshal postpones Kolkata concert

KOLKATA, 31 AUG

Singer Shreya Ghoshal on Saturday announced postponing her concert in Kolkata, stating that she was deeply affected by the rape and murder of the doctor at RG Kar hospital. On X, she said the concert scheduled on 14 September was highly anticipated but it was absolutely im-perative to take a stand and join those protesting in solidarity. *—PTI*

Doctors stage a protest against the alleged sexual assault and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata, in New Delhi on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Docs protest at Jantar Mantar over Kolkata rape

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Doctors in the national capital gathered at Jantar Mantar Saturday to protest against the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at a Kolkata hospital, asserting that without a central law to protect healthcare workers, female doctors would never feel safe during work.

Chairman of Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) Rohan Krishnan said they had earlier called off the protest due to the Supreme Court's intervention.

"Our fight will continue until justice is served," said Manish Jangra, founder and chief advisor of FAIMA. He added that members of the Resident Doctors of India (RDA) from hospitals around Delhi-NCR, such as Aligarh and Rohtak, will be part of the protest.

Meanwhile, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has written to the National Task Force (NTF), which has been mandated to for-mulate protocol for ensuring safety and security of health-care professional.

Firstly, putting forth its demand and justification for a central act on violence on doctors and hospitals, IMA submitted its study 'Safety During Night Duty: Survey of 3885 Doctors Across India", its draft proposal for Central Act, draft legislation - "The Healthcare Service Personnel and Clinical Establish-ments (Prohibition of violence and damage to property) Bill, 2019", the Epidemic Diseases (Amend-ment) Act September 2020 among oth-ers as annexures. Secondly, it said the concept of safe zones could be embedded in the proposed law as well. Third, it demanded improv-ing the working and living conditions of the resident doctors. *—PTI*

After Champai, former JMM MLA joins BJP

RANCHI, 31 AUG

A day after former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren joined BJP, ex-JMM legislator Lobin Hem-brom on Saturday crossed over to the saffron camp.

Hembrom was given mem-bership of the BJP by the par-ty's State chief Babulal Marandi in the presence of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Speaking on the occasion, Sarma said, “All big leaders, who were part of separate Jharkhand move-ment, are now joining BJP. The party wants overall development of the state and make it free from Bangladeshi infiltrators.”

"The JMM has changed from what was it in Guruji's (JMM supremo Shibu Soren) time. Now, there is no respect for senior leaders in the JMM. So, I decided to join BJP for devel-opment of Jharkhand and

Lobin Hembrom **PHOTO: X/@BJP4Jharkhand**

uplift of tribals," the former Borio legislator said at the saf-fron camp's State headquar-ters here.

Hembrom was disqualified from the Jharkhand Assembly under the anti-defection law with effect from 26 July.

The former legislator, who had been vocal against his own party, contested as an independent candi-date from the Rajmahal Lok Sabha seat, challenging JMM’s nominee Vijay Hansdak. Hembrom tasted defeat in the parliamen-tary elections. *—PTI*

In a setback for BJP, 2 more leaders quit ahead of J&K polls

JAMMU, 31 AUG

Two more BJP leaders, includ-ing a district president, sub-mitted their resignations from the primary membership of the party on Saturday, citing their resentment against the choice of candidates in their constituencies for the Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a related development, hundreds of BJP workers took out a rally in the Khour block of the Chhamb Assembly con-stituency in the outskirts of Jammu against fielding for-mer MLA Rajeev Sharma from there.

BJP is facing resentment over its ticket distribution in the Union Territory immedi-ately after it started releasing the list of candidates for the Assembly elections on 26 August, with party leaders and workers protesting in sev-

BJP workers protest expressing dissatisfaction with the party's ticket dis-tribution, in Jammu on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

eral districts of the Jammu region. In a damage control exercise, the party mobilised several top leaders, including Union ministers, to reach out to disgruntled leaders to defuse the situation. Two of its rebel leaders have already filed their nominations as independent candidates from Ramban and Padder-Nagseni Assembly constituencies, which are among 24 constitu-encies going to polls in the first phase of the elections on 18 September. *—PTI*

Eknath Shinde **PHOTO: PTI**

Now, 2.5cr more women to get Ladki Bahin scheme aid

NAGPUR, 31 AUG

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday said the ambit of the Majhi Ladki Bahin Scheme will be expanded to cover 2.5 crore women even as the State gov-ernment has transferred money into the bank accounts of 1.7 crore beneficiaries so far.

The Chief Minister launched the second phase of the scheme at Reshimbagh ground here in the pres-ence of Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, and Women and Child Welfare Minister Aditi Tatkare.

"We were not born with a golden spoon. We belong to the family of farmers. Having experienced pov-erty, we understood why a scheme like this was necessary. We know the value of Rs 1,500," Shinde said. The Ladki Bahin Scheme provides monthly assistance of Rs 1,500 to married, divorced, and destitute women in the 21-60 age group with a Rs 2.5 lakh annual family income ceiling.

Shinde slammed Opposition for criticising the scheme.

"The Opposition had previ-ously claimed that funds would not land in people's bank accounts. However, now that beneficiaries are receiv-ing money, they are asking them to withdraw it quickly," he said. *—PTI*

Jamiat Chief seeks SC action against Assam CM's 'anti-Muslim' remarks

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind on Saturday urged Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud to take suo motu action over Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's 'Miya Muslims' remarks, asserting that they constitute a "blatant betrayal of constitutional principles".

Jamiat President Maulana Mahmood Madani has written a letter to the CJI, Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP President JP Nadda, high-lighting the "series of uncon-stitutional remarks" made by Sarma and calling for immedi-

Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma **PHOTO: PTI**

ate action, a statement by the prominent Muslim body said.

Madani emphasised that these statements are not only highly inappropriate but also constitute a "bla-tant betrayal of constitutional principles".

He also urged the CJI to take suo moto action to put an end to these divisive comments.

Meanwhile, Sarma on Saturday slammed senior RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav for his remarks on namaz break rule and advised him to practice before preaching.

Yadav on Friday had alleged Sarma of seeking "cheap popu-larity" after the Assam Assembly scrapped a two-hour Jumma break.

Sarma said that excluding Assam assembly, there is no provision of such practice of the British legacy from 1937 anywhere including in Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha. *—PTI*

EP Jayarajan no longer party convenor, says LDF

T'PURAM, 31 AUG

Amidst reports that senior CPI(M) leader EP Jayarajan is no longer the convener of the ruling LDF in Kerala, a senior party leader on Saturday con-firmed that he does not hold the key post now, but did not give the reasons behind it.

CPI(M) leader TP Ramakrishnan, who will reportedly take over as head of the Left front in the state, said that the party secretary will explain why Jayarajan is not the LDF convener.

Ramakrishnan did not con-firm whether he has been appointed as LDF convener, but said that he will abide by the decisions of his party.

"The party has to officially announce who will be the next LDF convener. The reasons for EP Jayarajan not being LDF convener have to be explained by the party's state secretary," he told media.

The Congress-led UDF oppo-sition used the development to claim that it vindicates their allegation that Jayarajan had links with BJP leaders Prakash Javadekar and Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

Jayarajan abstained from the CPI(M) State committee meeting held during the day amidst reports that he has expressed his willingness to resign from his post. *—PTI*

BLAME GAME OVER DEFEAT

Nitish's aide in trouble over caste remark

PATNA, 31 AUG

A key aide of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday found himself in a tight spot over a remark he made recently, blaming a pow-erful upper caste for the JD(U)'s loss in a seat in the Lok Sabha polls.

Ashok Choudhary, one of the most influential ministers in the state cabinet, had made the utterances about ‘Bhumihars’ in Jehanabad district, which he visited on Thursday for a party function.

A video clip of his speech has gone viral in which Choudhary can be heard ruing that "just because we fielded a candidate from an extremely backward caste", the ‘Bhumihars’ did not support the JD(U) candi-date.

The remark was in the con-

Ashok Choudhary, key aide of Nitish Kumar blamed ‘Bhumihars’for JD(U)'s loss in a seat in LS polls **PHOTO: X/@ASHOKCHOUDHAARY**

text of former MP Chandeshwar Prasad Chandrawanshi, who failed to retain his seat in the elections, losing to the rival RJD nomi-nee by a margin of over one lakh votes.

The remark drew flak from ally BJP, with which ‘Bhumihars’ have been aligned for decades, the Congress which was their party of choice till the Mandal wave of 1990s, as also the RJD that has of late been trying to win over a section of the social group to widen its own base.

Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha said, "Bhumihars are not just a caste. They represent a cul-ture that is rooted to the ground. No well wisher of the society would make an adverse remark.”

Leader of the Opposition in state Assembly Tejashwi Yadav, said "it is in the char-acter of Nitish Kumar to take it out on those whom he per-ceives as not in support of the JD(U)". *—PTI*

Ajit absent as Shinde and Fadnavis visit RSS event

NAGPUR, 31 AUG

NCP leader and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday didn't join his Cabinet colleagues Devendra Fadnavis and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in visiting the Nagpur-based memorial of the RSS founder.

Taking a swipe, NCP (SP) leader and MLA Jitendra Awhad said people will not be fooled by Ajit's optics given that he shares power with BJP, backed by the Sangh.

Shinde and Fadnavis visited Hedgewar's memorial in Nagpur ahead of a "Mazi Ladki Bahin" scheme function in Nagpur. "Ajit Pawar is playing a game at a different level. He is politically sharing power with the BJP but has also been trying to project himself as a leader who will not visit the memorial (of the RSS found-er). He (Ajit Pawar) acts differ-

Ajit Pawar **PHOTO: PTI**

ently in public as a politician," Awhad alleged. He rejected Prime Minister Narendra Modi's apology over the col-lapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue. "Why did Modi raise the Veer Savarkar issue and demand an apology (for those who insulted) Savarkar while speaking about the statue incident? The Savarkar issue was over before the Lok Sabha elec-tions. It means he (Modi) did not want to apologise. Why bring up an issue nobody was discussing?" he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X_@PUREIDIOTT

Study begins at 6 high-risk glacial lakes in Sikkim

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

A fortnight-long study was launched on Saturday to evaluate the volume, depth and longitudinal profile of six high-risk glacial lakes in Sikkim, according to the officials. The objective of this expedition to Mangan district is to conduct a detailed susceptibility assessment of the high-risk Tenchungkha, Khangchung Chho, Lachen Khangtse, Lachung Khangtse, La Tsho and Shako Chho glacial lakes. These lakes pose a significant risk of glacial lake outburst floods. These floods can be catastrophic and threaten lives, property, critical infrastructure, and the environment. Sikkim was impacted by a glacial flood on 4 October, 2023, from the South Lhonak Glacial Lake.

Man accused of theft driven around after being tied to car

GODHRA, 31 AUG

A man was assaulted and driven around after being tied on the bonnet of a car in Gujarat's Panchmahal district allegedly by two people who accused him of stealing from a shop, a police official said on Saturday. The incident took place in Kanku Thambla village in Godhra taluka on 29 August after the victim was caught while allegedly trying to steal fertiliser from a shop. Videos shot by bystanders that were being circulated on social media showed the victim tied to the car's hood with a piece of rope and being driven through a market. "A case was registered against the victim Surjan Bhavri, 30, for attempted theft," an official said. Bavri has claimed he took three packets of seeds for Rs 30 but forgot to pay for them. —PTI

Remains of couple, their daughter found in MP house

PALGHAR, 31 AUG

Police have recovered the skeletal remains of three people - suspected to be an elderly couple and their daughter - from a house in a village in Palghar district of Maharashtra, a senior official said on Saturday. They were recovered from Nehroli village in Wada tehsil of the district on Friday, he said. "Local residents complained of foul smell emanating from the house, which was locked from inside, and alerted the police about it," senior inspector Datta Kindre of Wada police station said. The police personnel rushed to the house and broke open the door. They were shocked to find the skeletal remains of two women in the drawing room, while those of the man were inside in the bathroom. The bodies were completely decomposed with only skeletal remains in place. These remains are suspected to be those of a 70 year-old man, his 65-year-old wife and their daughter aged 35. —PTI

1962 Indo-China war's mortar bomb found in Assam

TEZPUR, 31 AUG

A mortar smoke bomb, believed to be of the 1962 Indo-China war era, was recovered from a river bed in Assam's Sonitpur district, a top police official said on Saturday.The bomb, which was found in Dhekiajuli area, has been safely blasted with the help of Army personnel, he added. Sonitpur Superintendent of Police Barun Purkayastha said the two-inch-long explosive was discovered by a person from Jougapur village while fishing in the Sesa river on Friday evening. "The area comes under Missamari police station. The bomb most likely is Chinese-made and from the 1962 war," he said. The war was fought in Arunachal Pradesh, neighbouring Assam. —PTI

Ranjith accused of sexually assaulting actor

FIR was filed after a male actor claimed he was lured to hotel, stripped & photographed

KOZHIKODE, 31 AUG

A second case for a sexual offence has been registered against director Ranjith on a complaint by a male actor in this district, police said on Saturday.

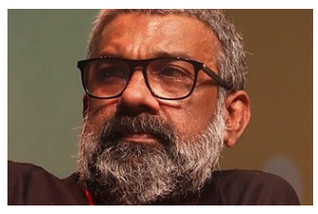
The complainant actor has alleged that the director called him to a hotel in Bengaluru in 2012, asked him to strip and took his nude photos promising prominent roles in exchange.

The victim claimed he believed it was part of the audition process and was even offered money the next morning.

The complainant also claimed, before TV channels, that the photos were sent to a well-known veteran female actor who has denied the allegation.

An FIR under sections 377 (unnatural offence) of the IPC and section 66 E (punishment for violation of privacy) of the Information Technology (IT) Act was lodged against the director on Friday night at the Kasaba police station, a senior police officer of the district said.

Earlier, a Bengali actor had filed a complaint against him, alleging sexual assault. The Kochi police have registered an FIR in connection with her



Ranjith PHOTO: PTI

complaint, which alleges that she was assaulted in a hotel in Kochi.

She had alleged that the director had touched her inappropriately with sexual intent after inviting her to act in the movie Paleri Manikyam in 2009.

Following the allegation by the actor, Ranjith had resigned from his post as chairman of Kerala Chalachitra Academy.

Multiple FIRs have been registered against many high profile Malayalam film personalities following allegations of sexual harassment against various directors and actors in the wake of revelations in the Justice K Hema Committee report.

The Justice Hema Committee was constituted by the Kerala government after the 2017 actress assault case and its report revealing instances of harassment and exploitation of women in the Malayalam cinema industry. —PTI

Mukesh need not resign as MLA: CPI(M)

The ruling CPI(M) in Kerala on Saturday said that actor-cum-MLA M Mukesh need not resign from his post as legislator merely because a rape case has been registered against him. The decision was announced by CPI(M) state secretary MV Govindan. Govindan, however, said the party also decided that Mukesh should not be part of the film-making policy committee and be removed from that in view of the allegations against him. Govindan also pointed out that there are 16 MPs and 135 MLAs in the country who are accused of committing offences against women, but have not resigned from their post. —PTI

I am not part of any power group: Mohanlal

T'PURAM, 31 AUG

Actor Mohanlal on Saturday said he was not part of any power group in the Malayalam film industry and he has no knowledge of the existence of any such group in the sector.

He said Malayalam cinema is a huge industry where thousands of people work and the actors's association AMMA (Association of Malayalam Movie Artists) could not address issues that cropped up there.

He said the executive panel of the Association headed by him resigned recently in the wake of allegations being raised against it after the release of the report by Justice Hema Committee.

It was for the first time that Mohanlal, former president of AMMA, was addressing the media following the release of the expert panel report which shed light on the alleged harassment and exploitation of women professionals in the Malayalam film industry.

"Wrongdoers should be punished if there is evidence against them," he said while referring to the allegations of sexual misconduct and assaults that surfaced against some of the members of the Association.

He also said the release of Hema Committee report was a good decision of the government. —PTI

Mohanlal PHOTO: PTI

- "Wrongdoers should be punished if there is evidence against them," he said while referring to the allegations of sexual misconduct and assaults that surfaced against actors

'HIDDEN CAMERAS USED IN CARAVANS TO FILM ACTRESSES'

T'PURAM, 31 AUG

South Indian actress Radhika Sarathkumar on Saturday made a startling claim that objectionable videos of female actors were recorded with hidden cameras inside caravans on the shooting set of a Malayalam film and she had personally witnessed male actors watching it on their mobile phones.

Radhika wondered why the Hema Committee report was delayed and pointed out that not just the Malayalam industry but alleged harassment and ill-treatment of women persists in other industries as well.

However, she was reluctant to divulge other details, including names of the film or the actors seen watching the illicit videos.

She also recalled having reacted strongly to this and warning the person in charge of the caravans of severe action if hidden cameras were found inside vehicles again. —PTI

Mudslide sparks panic in Wayanad

The aftermath of the 30 July disaster has left many survivors traumatised PHOTO: PTI

WAYANAD/ T'PURAM, 31AUG

A mudslide took place on Saturday just above Punchirimattam here, which was the epicentre of the 30 July landslides that claimed over 400 lives in the district.

The district administration said that it has warned those engaged in search operations and other work in that area to exercise caution.

Wayanad landslide areas out of bounds forever

Some of the landslides-affected areas of the Wayanad district may be declared permanent "no habitation" zones following the large devastation caused to their topography, Kerala government authorities fear.

The aftermath of the 30 July disaster has left many survivors traumatised, with many not wanting to return to their homes. Officials working to restore the lives of those affected, especially from Punchirimattam, Chooralmala and Mundakkai, told PTI that human habitation in parts of the first two villages may not be possible in the future. —PTI

PM gives ₹2L each to victims of Tripura floods

AGARTALA, 31 AUG

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sanctioned an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh for the next of kin of each of those who lost their lives in the recent flood in the north-eastern state.

The PM also approved Rs 50,000 each for those who were injured in the flood that wreaked havoc in Tripura, Saha said.

At least 32 people lost their lives, two others were injured and one went missing in the deluge during the August 19-24 period.

Depression in Bay of Bengal to cross Odisha, Andhra

The well-marked low-pressure area in the Bay of Bengal on Saturday intensified into a depression and the system is likely to cross north Andhra Pradesh and adjoining south Odisha coasts between Vishakhapatnam and Gopalpur close to Kalingapatnam around midnight, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Under its influence, Odisha is likely to experience isolated very heavy rainfall during this period, the weather agency said, adding that heavy rainfall may also continue on September. —PTI

PHOTO: PTI

- Under its influence, Odisha is to experience isolated very heavy rainfall during this period, the weather agency said, adding that heavy rainfall may also continue on September.

200 DAYS OF DELHI CHALO

Vinesh joins farmers' protest in Shambu

CHANDIGARH, 31 AUG

Olympic wrestler Vinesh Phogat on Saturday joined protesting farmers at the Shambhu border between Punjab and Haryana and said the Central government should pay heed to their demands and make it a priority to address their issues.

Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha held a 'kisan mahapanchayat' during the day to mark the completion of 200 days of their 'Delhi Chalo' agitation to press for their demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP.

The farmers have been protesting at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana since 13 February, when their march was stopped by security forces.

Phogat, who was disqualified from the 50-kg final match in the recent Olympic Games held in Paris, was felicitated by the protesting farmers.

Vinesh Phogat PHOTO: PTI

In her address, the wrestler lent her support to the farmers, saying, "I want to tell you that your daughter is with you." She also asserted that farmers' demands were not "illegitimate". Speaking to reporters, Phogat said the farmers are holding the protest as their demands have still not been accepted. "It hurts to see them," she added.

"Sometimes we feel helpless at not being able to do anything for them. We represent the country at international levels but we could not do anything for our own family. It is a request that the government should listen to them," she said. —PTI

'Keep lawyers, outsiders away from temple boards'

PRAYAGRAJ, 31 AUG

The Allahabad High Court has called for advocates and people from district administration to be kept away from the management and control of temples, saying people from religious fraternity should be given charge.

The court made the remarks during the hearing of a contempt application concerning the appointment of a 'Receiver' in a temple-related dispute filed by Devendra Kumar Sharma and another petitioner from Mathura district. "Now, the time has come when all these temples should be freed from the clutches of practising advocates of Mathura court, and courts should make every endeavour to appoint, if necessary, a 'Receiver', who is connected with the management of a temple and has some religious leaning towards the deity," Justice Rohit Ranjan Agarwal observed while disposing of the contempt petition. The court was informed that there are 197 pending civil suits concerning temples in Mathura. "People will lose faith if the temples and religious trusts are not managed and run by persons belonging to religious fraternity but by outsiders. Such actions should be prevented at the very beginning," the judge said. —PTI

Kukis protest over 'leaked' audio of Biren

Students protest at Jantar Mantar against the alleged genocide campaign against the Kuki-Zo with a demand for urgent establishment of a Union Territory, in New Delhi, on Saturday PHOTO: PTI

IMPHAL, 31 AUG

People belonging to the Kuki-Zo community on Saturday took out three rallies in parts of Manipur to press their demand for a separate administration and protested against the viral audio clips allegedly of Chief Minister N Biren Singh, in which certain objectionable comments were made.

They organised the rallies at Leishang in Churachandpur district, Keithelmanbi in Kangpokpi and Moreh in Tengnoupal.

All markets and schools in the district remained closed in view of the rally organised by students belonging to the Kuki-Zo community.

Hundreds of protesters participated in the rally which commenced from Keithelmanbi Military colony in Kangpokpi and they marched to Thomas ground in the district headquarters covering a distance of 8 km.

The Manipur government had said that the audio clips, falsely claiming to be the voice of Biren, were released on social media in an attempt to derail peace initiatives in the ethnic violence-affected state.

Another protest march was also held in the India-Myanmar border town of Moreh, demanding a separate administration.

In an interview with PTI, Biren rejected the demand by Kukis for a separate administration, presenting himself as a champion of the state's interest and one who will not allow its identity to be diluted. —PTI

AMID SETBACKS

NTCA approves Project Cheetah web series

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has approved a proposal for the filming of a four-part web series on Project Cheetah to "showcase the efforts of the country to the world", official records show.

It is learned that the filming is likely to start in September, around the second anniversary of Project Cheetah on 17 September.

In a letter to the chief wildlife warden of Madhya Pradesh on 21 July, Vaibhav Chandra Mathur, Deputy Inspector General of the NTCA, wrote that the eighth technical committee of the authority accorded approval to the proposal for a web series on the world's first intercontinental translocation of a large carnivore -- Project Cheetah.

Since they arrived in India, eight adult cheetahs have died. Seventeen cubs have been born in India, with 12 surviving PHOTO: PTI

According to the proposal, seen by PTI, the web series will be aired on Discovery Network in 170 countries in different languages.

The film aims to highlight the conceptualisation of Project Cheetah, the struggles faced in bringing the animal back to India, the status of the cheetahs and the expectations for the future.

Bhopal-based wildlife activist Ajay Dubey questioned the rush to film the "documentary", saying that the project faces "several challenges that should be addressed first".

Twenty cheetahs have been brought to India from Africa so far -- eight from Namibia in September 2022 and 12 from South Africa in February 2023.

Some of the cheetahs were initially released into the wild but were returned to enclosures by August 13 last year after three cheetahs died of septicemia.

The only free-ranging cheetah, Pawan, was found dead on Tuesday, with officials suggesting drowning as the primary cause of death.

The project initially drew criticism due to the animals' deaths.

Since they arrived in India, eight adult cheetahs -- three females and five males -- have died. Seventeen cubs have been born in India, with 12 surviving. —PTI

Snag-hit helicopter being airlifted crashes in Kedarnath

RUDRAPRAYAG, 31 AUG

A snag-hit helicopter being towed to Gauchar for repairs by an MI-17 chopper of the Indian Air Force crashed in the hills near Kedarnath on Saturday.

There were no casualties as the helicopter that crashed was unoccupied, Rudraprayag's District Tourism Officer Rahul Chaubey said.

The helicopter belonged to Crystal Aviation Pvt Ltd and had been lying in disuse since its emergency landing in Kedarnath on 24 May after developing a technical snag, he said.

In the 24 May emergency landing by the helicopter, all seven people on board, including pilgrims, escaped unhurt.

It was being taken to Gauchar for repairs on Saturday morning by an MI-17 helicopter which began to go

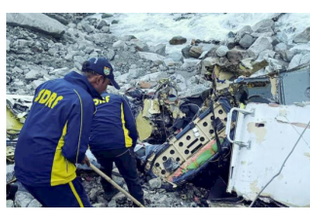


PHOTO: PTI

off balance over Lincholi.

Sensing trouble, the pilot of the MI-17 dropped the snag-hit chopper at a vacant spot so that there was no human casualty, Chaubey said.

There was no passenger or luggage in the crashed helicopter.

A rescue team reached the spot as soon as information was received. The team is inspecting the situation, the official said.

Authorities have appealed to people not to spread any rumours about the helicopter crash. —PTI

RUSHING BACK HOME

Candidates rush to board a train at the railway station after the Uttar Pradesh police recruitment exam in Meerut on Saturday. The Uttar Pradesh Police recruitment exam took place at 1,174 centres in 67 districts of the State on the last day of the five-day exercise, which began last week
PHOTO: PTI

Bangladeshi students lead flood relief efforts

In the wake of severe flooding in Bangladesh, the student community, which led the people's uprising that resulted in the ouster of Sheikh Hasina, is channelling its revolutionary zeal into spearheading flood relief efforts for millions affected by the calamity.

"This isn't just about relief; it's about making a difference, just like we did during the Monsoon Revolution," said Rafiq, a student at Dhaka University, as he and fellow students formed a human chain at the heart of the campus, passing sacks of rice and other supplies hand to hand to load onto trucks bound for flood-stricken regions of Bangladesh.

The student community across Bangladesh has risen to the occasion, demonstrating their ability to lead and mobilise resources in a time of national emergency.

The recent floods, which have claimed several lives and affected nearly 5 million people, have spurred a remarkable wave of student-led relief efforts, transforming their recent revolutionary fervour into a crucial force for recovery. The torrential rains that triggered the floods have wreaked havoc across 11 districts, including Feni, Chittagong, and Sylhet, and the magnitude of the disaster has overwhelmed traditional relief mechanisms, elevating the role of students to that of primary responders.

In Dhaka, the capital, a surge of student activism has shifted from political protest to flood relief. Sara Khan, a third-year political science student at Dhaka University, has been a central figure in these efforts.

On August 5, the student-led Monsoon Revolution under the banner of "Students Against Discrimination" succeeded in ousting Hasina's 16-year regime, propelled by fervent demands for change and accountability. The transition from revolutionary activism to humanitarian aid was swift. Immediately after the floods struck, student volunteers from Dhaka, Chattogram, and nearby areas mobilized to Feni with life jackets, basic food, drinking water, trucks, and speedboats to rescue those stranded, driven by their recent activism and unified resolve despite the absence of formal organization. Dhaka University (DU), the cradle of the anti-Awami League government movement that dislodged them, is overflowing with relief supplies as hundreds of volunteers work tirelessly to gather, sort, and package donations for dispatch to the flood-stricken areas. The students from medical colleges and nursing schools have also sprung into action, dispatching teams to flood-affected areas to provide medical help to the people.

The recent floods in Bangladesh have claimed several lives and affected nearly 5 million people ***PHOTO: PTI***

Monsoon rainfall-triggered floods in deltaic Bangladesh and upstream Indian regions posed a huge administrative challenge to the newly installed interim government amid a political transition.

Several rivers are flowing above the danger mark, particularly in northeastern, eastern, and southeastern Bangladesh, inundating many cities and towns apart from several hundred villages, killing people, damaging infrastructure, and disrupting communication lines. Masukh and his peers have divided their efforts into teams, with rescue teams navigating through treacherous floodwaters, reaching stranded communities, and providing immediate aid. The distribution teams handle the transport and delivery of essential supplies such as food, water, and medical kits to ensure timely assistance, while support teams manage relief drives, oversee funds, and collect donations to keep the entire operation running smoothly and efficiently from start to finish. Using social media to coordinate logistics, recruit volunteers, and share updates, students have amplified their relief efforts, with Rafiq noting that "social media has been key in mobilizing support and keeping everyone informed." Responding to the students' call, the community's response has been crucial, with local businesses, shopkeepers, and residents contributing generously, from cash to clothing, and as Zainab Ahmed, a student leading donation drives, put it, "It's inspiring to see such widespread response."

The student-led initiatives are more than just a response to the flood crisis; they represent a broader commitment to national recovery and rebuilding. Golam Sarwar Milon, the first president of the Bangladesh Jatiotabadi Chatra Dal—the student wing of the BNP—said that the students have shown they have both the zeal to lead a revolution and the capability to shoulder responsibilities in times of crisis. The students constructed elaborate dam models and staged vivid street plays, with colourful banners and makeshift river replicas drawing the attention of passersby as they enacted scenarios illustrating the impact of the water release, all in a bid to rally for solidarity and raise awareness. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated that floods in the shared rivers between the two countries are a "shared" problem affecting people on both sides and require close mutual cooperation to resolve.

—PTI

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساہر

Wildfires rage in Brazil, threatening rare species

Two jaguar cubs burned to death, their small bodies carbonized. Tapirs with raw, bloodied paws had been scalded by smoldering cinders. Nests of unhatched eggs from rare parrots were consumed by flames as tall as trees.

Wildfires are laying waste to Brazil's Pantanal, the world's largest tropical wetland and one of the most important biodiversity sanctuaries on the planet.

And the blazes, the worst on record since Brazil started tracking fires in 1998, are taking a deadly toll on wild animals, including at-risk species that scientists have been working for decades to protect. "We're watching the biodiversity of the Pantanal disappear into ash," said Gustavo Figueirôa, a biologist working for SOS Pantanal, a conservation nonprofit. "It's being burned to a crisp."

The Pantanal is a maze of rivers, forests and marshlands that sprawl over 68,000 square miles, an area 20 times the size of the Everglades. About 80 per cent lies within Brazil, with the rest in Bolivia and Paraguay. Usually flooded for much of the year, the Pantanal in recent years has been parched by a string of severe droughts that scientists have linked to deforestation and climate change.

Since the start of the year, wildfires have burned over 7,000 square miles, an area the size of New Jersey, in Brazil's share of the Pantanal.

The wetlands, parts of which are on UNESCO's list of heritage sites because of their rich biodiversity, are home to the world's biggest parrot, the highest concentration of caimans and threatened wildlife including the giant otter. They also harbor animals that have evolved in ways distinctive from others in their species, such as larger jaguars that dive into flooded plains to fish for food.

Researchers have counted at least 4,700 plant and animal species in the Pantanal, though they say many more have yet to be discovered by scientists. "There's so much we still don't know," said Luciana Leite, a biologist and a climate campaigner for the Environmental Justice Foundation. "It's such a special region."

But the wildfires, fanned by strong winds and searing temperatures, are threatening this natural laboratory, killing or injuring giant anteaters, lowland tapirs, marsh deer, hyacinth macaws and caimans.

The flames have caught even jaguars, normally agile enough to escape most dangers. Three have been found dead since the fires erupted, while four others were rescued and treated for burns, according to conservationists in the region.

"If the jaguar — an animal that runs, climbs, swims — is being affected on this scale, what chance do slower animals have?" said Enderson Barreto, a veterinarian and a director of the Response Group for Animals in Disasters, a volunteer organization working in the Pantanal.

Jaguars are listed as vulnerable in Brazil, which is home to about half of the world's population of the animal. Now, the fires are approaching a reserve that is home to the world's highest density of jaguars (four to eight animals for each 40 square miles), and experts fear that the death toll of jaguars, and many other animals, may climb.

"We're really nervous watching this unfold," said Barreto, who is working on the front lines of the rescue efforts inside the Pantanal. "The outlook is not good."

Scientists say it is too early to say precisely how many animals are dying in the blazes, since many are perishing in remote regions that rescue workers cannot reach. But they fear the toll could exceed that of fires that ravaged the region in 2020, killing some 17 million animals and burning nearly one-third of the Pantanal in Brazil. "We're not only witnessing a repeat of a tragedy," Leite said. "It's actually a situation that's much worse."

One animal that became a victim was named Gaia and had played a key role in the Pantanal's fledgling ecotourism industry for a decade. Spunky and social, Gaia, a 130-pound spotted jaguar, did not shy away from the pickup trucks carrying tourists from a nearby ecolodge. She became a local celebrity among wildlife enthusiasts. Then, this month, the flames arrived at breakneck speed. Gaia didn't have time to flee.

The news jolted Figueiroa, who had monitored the jaguar and her siblings when they were still cubs. "That was one of the best sightings of my life," he said, lifting a pant leg to reveal a tattoo of Gaia's sister on his calf.

"When I saw Gaia burned, turned into coal, I could just imagine the pain she must have felt," Figueiroa added. "It was a feeling of frustration and despair and helplessness." The fires have also killed at least three giant anteaters, mammals known for their distinctive long snout and 2-foot-long tongue, which they use to scoop up insects.

—Courtesy, NYT q

The blazes in Pantanal, the worst on record since Brazil started tracking fires in 1998, are taking a deadly toll on wild animals ***PHOTO: ANI***

Re-released films a boon for audiences, exhibitors and producers

With a host of new films, including star-led biggies, tanking at the box-office, older ones are being re-released on the big screen to surprising success -- from the 2012 hit "Gangs of Wasseypur" full of blood, gore and revenge to the romantic "Laila Majnu" that had a lacklustre run when it was first released in 2018.

According to trade experts and exhibitors, this is a good way to fill up the halls and recover money as those who loved watching these movies or missed them at the time of their release seem keen for the big screen experience.

"It's beneficial for exhibitors, and whoever holds the right to the film also earns money. For instance, when 'Laila Majnu' and 'Rockstar' were released, they didn't do well but this generation loved these films.

"The average occupancy for 'Laila Majnu' was 40 per cent all over India. In some properties in Mumbai, it registered over 80 per cent occupancy," trade analyst Atul Mohan told PTI, adding that he is confident that "Gangs of Wasseypur" will be immensely loved.

While "Stree 2" is doing well at the box office with earnings crossing over Rs 600 crore globally, the year was not that good for big budget, star-led vehicles like "Fighter", "Maidaan", "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan", "Sarfira", and "Auron Mein Kahan Dum Tha". "Kalki 2898 AD", "Munjya", "Stree 2" and "Crew" were other handful exceptions to the poor run of Hindi cinema in theatres.

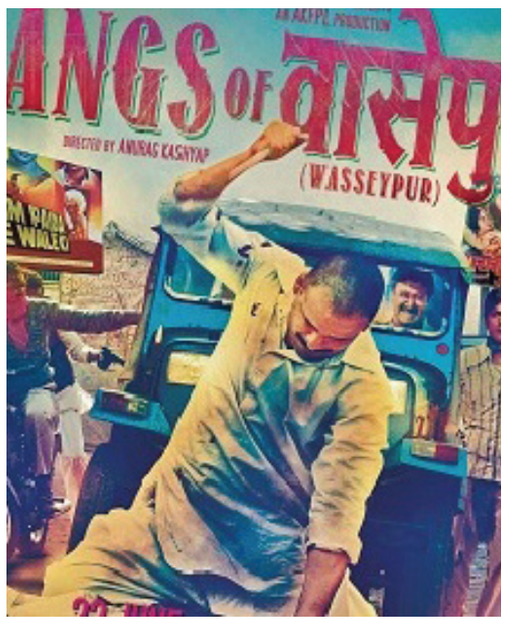
This month alone has witnessed a wave of re-releases of films, some of which are already available on streaming platforms. The films returning to theatres include romance dramas like Salman Khan's "Maine Pyar Kiya" (1989), "Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein" and two-part revenge drama "Gangs of Wasseypur".

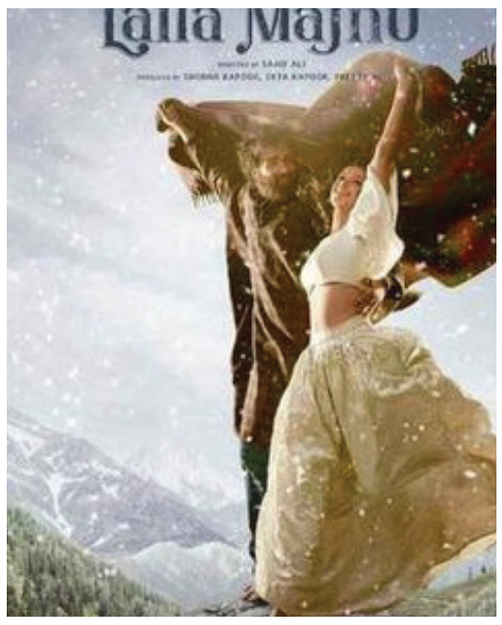
Movies like "Rockstar", "Jab We Met", "Yeh Jawani Hai Deewani", "Chak De! India" and "Hum Aapke Hain Koun...!" also made a return to theatres for a while.

Imtiaz Ali-presented "Laila Majnu" earned Rs 6.15 crore in 14 days (according to Sacnilk). The Triptii Dimri and Avinash Tiwary-starrer didn't do well in 2018 despite good reviews.

Nitin Datar, President of Cinema Owners and Exhibitors Association of India, told PTI: "The response to re-released films has been generally good. I hope this trend continues because it's helping the exhibition industry to engage with the audience differently. Exhibitors are reeling under losses as the newly-released films are not appealing to people."

Jaipur-based senior distributor and exhibitor Raj Bansal said there has been a marginal rise in their business because of this trend.But the trend of re-releasing films is not new to Bollywood, he said, adding that it was quite prevalent in the '70s, '80s and '90s when films like "Mother India", "Mughal-E-Azam", "Sholay", and Govinda's "Aankhen" made a successful return to theatres a year after their theatrical release due to public demand. "During those days, the business was at least 20 to 25 per cent more than what it is today. Now, multiplexes have no choice but to release old films. The business is not that great but it's just that cinema houses are not running empty because we've to bear the expenses of staff, electricity, etc. When cinema lovers come to watch movies, we earn some money via ticket prices, popcorn, parking, etc. The occupancy for such films is 20 to 40 per cent," Bansal told PTI. Ashish Kanakia, CEO of MovieMax Cinemas, emphasised that re-released films do not always generate huge profits but for them, it's all about bringing audiences to theatres. "Re-released films represent a different kind of investment. They help us maintain a balance between showing new and old films, which helps keep our audience numbers steady," Kanakia told PTI.





The trade experts and exhibitors feel that this is a good way to recover money as those who loved watching these movies or missed them at the time of their release seem keen for the big screen experience ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

"Usually, the occupancy for re-released films hovers around 30 per cent, but it's about more than just the numbers. It's about giving people the opportunity to relive the nostalgia and magic of the big screen experience. Besides, the success of re-releases shows that people still have a strong desire to experience their favourite films in theatres," he said. But why are people paying and watching old films in theatres when they are available on streaming platforms?

Binita Bhimani, 30, said she watched "Rockstar" for the first time when it was re-released in May and immensely enjoyed the experience. "I wanted to see 'Rockstar' in a theatre since I had not seen it on the big screen when it was released earlier. I loved the songs of the film, I wanted to experience it. I enjoyed it," Binita told PTI.

Imtiaz Ali called the re-release of his past movies a "people-led movement" in a recent interview with PTI. "They first asked for 'Rockstar', and then 'Laila Majnu'. I'm thankful to the audience that they've started this new trend that the film is permanent and the fact that it can always be brought back to the theatre." "I'm glad that people can return to my films whenever they want, just as I return to many of my favourite films by other filmmakers again and again," said Ali, who revisits movies of Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy, Vijay Anand, Shyam Benegal's "Junoon" and "Sholay". In September, there are a handful of films awaiting release including Kangana Ranaut-starrer "Emergency", Hansal Mehta-directed "The Buckingham Murders" featuring Kareena Kapoor Khan, and Siddhant Chaturvedi's "Yudhra". Trade analyst Taran Adarsh said there's a "scarcity" of new theatrical releases and noted that re-releasing old films is proving to be beneficial in urban India. "Now, we've got a scarcity of movies in theatres, so films that have cultivated a strong base or perhaps didn't get the due over the years, are being re-released like 'Laila Majnu', 'Rehna Hai Tere Dil Mein', which is great. "However, you can't expect every film to be a gold mine after being re-released. This (re-releasing films) is mainly targeted at urban centres. In the interiors, I don't think they will be interested in watching a repeat unless it's a 'Sholay', 'Deewar', or 'Amar Akbar Anthony'," Adarsh told Amit Sharma, MD, Miraj Entertainment Limited emphasized that re-releasing old films ensures a steady flow of content for multiplexes.

—PTI

PHOTO: X/@WKBN

6 people injured in knife attack on bus in Germany

BERLIN, 31 AUG

Police arrested a 32-year-old woman after six people were hurt in a knife attack on a bus headed to a festival in western Germany. Authorities said on Saturday that there was no evidence of a political or religious motive. Three of those attacked are in life-threatening condition, police said on Friday evening. The knife attack took place in Siegen, east of Cologne. The bus was on its way to a local festival in the town and at least another 40 people were on board when the attack took place at about 7.40 pm. Police and prosecutors said the six people wounded were aged between 16 and 30 and all were from the region. By Saturday morning, three of them had left the hospital after outpatient treatment. Local authorities planned to go ahead with the festival. *—AP*

Iran village hits 82.2°C heat index

TEHRAM 31 AUG

A village located off the southern coast of Iran may have experienced dangerously high temperatures recently, with the Dayrestan Airport weather station recording a heat index of 82.2°C on 28 August. If verified, this heat index, along with a dew point of 36.1°C, could be among the highest ever recorded globally. The temperature at Dayrestan Airport was noted as 38.8°C at 10:30 am on Aug 28, according to data from the US National Weather Service, which gathers global data from METAR reports used by aviation and meteorology professionals. Although the temperature alone might not seem extreme, when combined with a relative humidity of 85%, it results in a "feels like" temperature of 82.2°C. *—Courtesy, Education post*

Child abuse images removed from AI image-gen training

WASHINGTON, 31 AUG

Artificial intelligence researchers have said they deleted more than 2,000 web links to suspected child sexual abuse imagery from a dataset used to train popular AI image-generator tools. The LAION research dataset is a huge index of online images and captions that's been a source for leading AI image-makers such as Stable Diffusion and Midjourney. But a report last year by the Stanford Internet Observatory found it contained links to sexually explicit images of children, contributing to the ease with which some AI tools have been able to produce photorealistic deepfakes that depict children. That December report led LAION, which stands for the nonprofit Large-scale Artificial Intelligence Open Network, to immediately remove its dataset. *—AP*

Lego on track for sustainable bricks by 2032

NEW YORK, 31 AUG

Lego is ditching fossil fuels for a more planet-friendly material. This week, the toy maker announced it was eliminating the use of oil in its bricks and replacing it with renewable materials and recycled plastic. The company will do so by decreasing the percentage of oil in its bricks while adding more certified renewable or recycled materials. Of course, the bricks that make up Hagrid's Hut, the Wicked Set, and Fortnite Battle Buses will cost more to produce. The company says it will be paying up to 70 per cent more for the new material, a certified renewable resin. "This means a significant increase in the cost of producing a Lego brick," CEO Niels Christiansen told Reuters. *—Courtesy, Fast Company*

NATO chief backs Ukraine's Kursk offensive

Ukraine claims that it has captured dozens of small towns

UNITED NATION, 31 AUG

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has described Ukraine's ongoing incursion into Russia's Kursk region as a legitimate form of self-defence.

"Ukraine has a right to defend itself," he told Germany's Die Welt newspaper on Saturday. "And according to international law, this right does not stop at the border." The offensive, which caught the Kremlin off guard when it was launched from Ukraine's Sumy region on 6 August, is now in its fourth week.

Ukrainian troops claim to have captured dozens of small towns and villages across over 1,200 square kilometers (around 500 square miles) of territory and claimed to have taken hundreds of Russian prisoners of war. "The Russian soldiers, tanks and bases [in Kursk] are legitimate targets under international law," said Stoltenberg, adding that Kyiv had not informed NATO about its plan beforehand and did not play a role in them.

Stoltenberg, who is stepping down as NATO chief in October, also welcomed Germany's commitment to continue its support for Ukraine – despite Berlin's plans to reduce its own direct contribution to Kyiv in next year's budget. He praised "Germany's clear commitment to remaining Ukraine's primary military donor in Europe and the second-biggest worldwide [after the United States]."

The German government has justified plans to cut direct aid to Ukraine from £7.48 billion to around £4 billion in 2025 by highlighting a European Union plan to divert interest accumulated from frozen Russian assets held within the bloc to Kyiv. *—DW News*

A national guard patrols inside the Kursk region; (inset) Jens Stolenberg
PHOTOS: @DEFENCEU/@FRONT_UKRAINIAN

- The offensive, which caught the Kremlin off guard when it was launched from Ukraine's Sumy region is now in its fourth week

Russian copter with 22 onboard goes missing

MOSCOW, 31 AUG

Rescuers are searching for a helicopter that went missing in Russia's far east on Saturday with 22 people on board. The Mi-8 helicopter took off close to the Vachkazhets volcano in the Kamchatka region, but did not arrive at its destination as scheduled, Russia's Federal Air Transport Agency said in a statement. It said it believed that 19 passengers and three crew members were on board.
The Mi-8 is a two-engine helicopter designed in the 1960s. *—AP*

AHEAD OF PREZ POLLS

Will vote to uphold Florida abortion ban, says Trump

NEW YORK, 31 AUG

Former President Donald Trump on Friday said he will vote no on a Florida ballot measure that would repeal the state's six-week abortion ban, a day after he seemed to indicate he would vote in favour of the measure.

Trump has said he thinks Florida's ban is a mistake and said in an interview with Fox News Channel on Friday, "I think six weeks, you need more time." But then he said, "at the same time, the Democrats are radical," and he repeated false claims he has frequently made about late-term abortions and said that he opposed allowing abortions up until nine months.

"So I'll be voting no for that vreason," said Trump, who is registered to vote at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida.

The Florida ballot measure would legalise abortion until fetal viability, a term used by health care providers to describe whether a pregnancy is expected to continue developing normally or whether a fetus might survive outside the uterus. It's generally considered to be around 23 or 24 weeks, which is about six months. *—AP*

Donald Trump PHOTO: PTI

Donald Trump criticises transgender rights again

WASHINGTON, 31 AUG

Republican Presidential nominee Donald Trump lamented the growing acceptance of transgender Americans Friday in an appearance at the annual gathering of Moms for Liberty, a national nonprofit that has spearheaded efforts to get mentions of LGBTQ+ identity and structural racism out of K-12 classrooms.

Trump said transgender women should not be allowed to play in women's sports and said access to gender-affirming health care should be restricted. But he largely stuck to his favourite topics during an hourlong "fireside chat" in Washington, where he lashed out at President Joe Biden, deplored illegal immigration and reminisced about his parents' marriage, his path to being the reality television star of "The Apprentice" and the debate that ended Biden's reelection campaign.

As the Earth sizzled through a summer with four of the hottest days ever measured, Vice President Kamala Harris and Trump also have starkly different visions on how to address a changing climate while ensuring a reliable energy supply. But neither has provided many details on how they would get there.

Trump has launched a fresh personal attack on his Democratic rival Kamala Harris, calling her "defective". And we don't need another defective person as president of the United States," he said. *—AP*

AMID TURMOIL

'Hasina's extradition key to Indo-Bangla relations'

DHAKA, 31 AUG

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has said that it's crucial to start a new chapter in the Indo-Bangla ties, which should begin with the extradition of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, as her continued presence in India could further damage bilateral relations.

The veteran leader, the second-in-command of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), emphasised his party's desire for strong relations with India, stating they are prepared to "move past previous differences and collaborate".

He also assured that the BNP would never permit any activities on Bangladeshi soil that could threaten India's security.

In an interview with PTI at his residence in Dhaka, Alamgir said if the BNP is voted to power, it will review and re-evaluate the "questionable" Adani electricity deal signed during the Awami League regime, as it is putting "tremendous pressure" on the people of Bangladesh.

Claiming that it was a diplomatic failure on the part of New Delhi for failing to understand the psyche of the people of Bangladesh, Alamgir said that even after the fall of the Hasina government following a people's uprising, the "Indian establishment is yet to reach out to BNP, even though China, the US, the UK, and Pakistan have already done so."

"Sheikh Hasina has to face the law of Bangladesh for all the crimes and corruption committed by her and her regime. To enable this and respect the sentiments of the people of Bangladesh, India should ensure her return to Bangladesh," he said. *—PTI*

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Sheikh Hasina PHOTO: PTI

- BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir also assured that the BNP would never permit any activities on Bangladeshi soil that could threaten India's security

2 NEW MURDER CASES FILED AGAINST HASINA

DHAKA, 31 AUG

Two new murder cases have been filed against Bangladesh's deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her former cabinet ministers for the killing of three people, including two BNP activists, during the quota reform protests in the country, according to media reports.

The cases, filed in Dhaka courts on Friday, were the latest in the slew of cases filed against the 76-year-old leader after her resignation and fleeing to India on 5 August following a massive protest by students against a quota system in government jobs.

With this, the tally of cases filed against Hasina has risen to 84, including 70 on murder charges. *—PTI*

Israeli strike kills 4 Palestinians in Gaza

DUBAI, 31 AUG

An Israeli military strike hit the first vehicle in a convoy carrying medical supplies and fuel to an Emirati hospital in the Gaza Strip, killing four Palestinians from a local transportation company, officials said Friday.

The Israeli military insisted the four men were carrying weapons while the American Near East Refugee Aid group said the missile strike on Thursday came without any warning or prior communication with soldiers.

The incident underlines the chaotic situation prevailing in the Gaza Strip and the dangers posed to aid groups since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war following Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel. Over 80 per cent of the Palestinian territory's 2.3 million people have been displaced, with most now living in squalid tent camps. International experts say hundreds of thousands of people are on the brink of famine.

The strike happened as the aid group was bringing supplies to the Emirates Red Crescent Hospital in the town of Rafah. Anera's director for the Palestinian territories. It hit the convoy's first vehicle on the Salah al-Din Road, she said.

The group said its "coordinated and cleared transport plan called for unarmed security guards in the convoy" with its local partner, a company called Move One. *—AP*

PHOTO: PTI

Brazil blocks Musk's X after it refuses to name local agent

SAO PAULO, 31 AUG

Brazil started blocking Elon Musk's social media platform X early Saturday, making it largely inaccessible on both the web and through its mobile app after the company refused to comply with a judge's order.

X missed a deadline imposed by Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes to name a legal representative in Brazil, triggering the suspension. It marks an escalation in the monthslong feud between Musk and de Moraes over free speech, far-right accounts and misinformation.

To block X, Brazil's telecommunications regulator, Anatel, told internet service providers to suspend users' access to the social media platform. As of Saturday after midnight local time, major operators had begun doing so.

De Moraes had warned Musk on Wednesday night that X could be blocked in Brazil if he failed to comply with his order to name a representative, and established a 24-hour deadline. The company hasn't had a representative in the country since earlier this month. The justice said the platform will stay suspended until it complies with his orders, and also set a daily fine of 50,000 reais ($8,900) for people or companies using VPNs to access it.

Brazil is one of the biggest markets for X, which has struggled with the loss of advertisers since Musk purchased the former Twitter in 2022. Market research group Emarketer says some 40 million Brazilians, roughly one-fifth of the population, access X at least once per month. *—AP*

A JOINT OPERATION

The United States military and Iraq launched a joint raid targeting suspected Islamic State group militants in the country's western desert that killed at least 15 people and saw seven American troops hurt in the operation
PHOTO: X/@WARMONITOR3

UK: Indian-origin writer dramatises history of Empire

LONDON, 31 AUG

An Indian-origin playwright has joined hands with a former diplomat for a unique immersive theatrical experience, with the city of London as their stage to tell the story of the East India Company and British Empire.

'A London Lark Rising' is a dramatised walking tour being brought to life by Dr Anu Kumar Lazarus and Lisa Honan, with double shows scheduled next weekend on 7 September. The so-called "walking play" spans hundreds of years of history as it takes audiences through well-known and lesser-known sites in the heart of London, showcasing several famous historic characters from both India and the UK. "When I finished the writing, I realised it was too big for the stage and decided to put it on the streets it had been inspired by," explained Kumar Lazarus. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

RAIN FURY

NIGERIA'S FLOODS KILL AT LEAST 200

ABUJA, 31 AUG

Weeks of flooding have killed nearly 200 people in Nigeria and washed away homes and farmlands, the country's disaster management agency said, further threatening food supplies, especially in the hard-hit northern region.

The floods blamed on poor infrastructure and badly maintained dams have killed 185 people and displaced 2,08,000 in 28 of Nigeria's 36 states, the National Emergency Management Agency said in an update Friday, triggering frantic efforts to evacuate hundreds of thousands to makeshift shelters. Nigeria records flooding every year mostly as a result of failure to follow environmental guidelines and inadequate infrastructure. The worst floods the country has seen in a decade were in 2022 when more than 600 people were killed and over 1 million displaced.

The Nigeria disaster response agency warned the flooding could get worse in the coming weeks. *—AP*

The floods blamed on poor infrastructure and badly maintained dams have killed 185 people and displaced 2,08,000 PHOTO: X/@THECABLENG

Pakistan braces for rains as cyclone Asna draws closer

ISLAMABAD, 31 AUG

Pakistani authorities on Saturday warned of heavy rains and gusty winds lashing the coastal areas of the country due to a cyclonic storm over the Arabian Sea.

The cyclonic storm Asna over the northeast Arabian Sea off the Sindh coast has moved further westward during the past nine hours and now lies about 200km southwest of Karachi, according to an advisory by the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

It also said that the storm system is likely to track further west-southwestwards. The PMD said, rain-thundershowers accompanied by squally winds were likely in Karachi division, Badin, and in other places. *—PTI*

Shanshan moves across Japan, torrential rains predicted

TOKYO, 31 AUG

Tropical Storm Shanshan slowly made its way into central Japan on Saturday, halting trains and leaving underground passages brimming with water as officials warned of torrential rains in major cities, including Osaka and Tokyo. The storm, packing winds of up to 65 kilometres per hour, crawled past the southwestern island of Shikoku and was travelling over the southern part of the main Honshu island at a speed of 15 kph by late afternoon. Initially categorised as a typhoon, Shanshan made landfall Thursday. *—AP*

Mumbai property market sees 8% surge in August

MUMBAI, 31 AUG

Approximately 11,735 properties were registered within Mumbai's municipal limits, generating over Rs 1,072 crore in stamp duty revenue for the state exchequer which marks an 8 per cent increase in property registrations and 32 per cent rise in revenue year-on-year (YoY), according to Knight Frank report in August. The Mumbai property market has reached a milestone, recording the highest property registrations and revenue collections in a decade. Residential units dominated the market, comprising 80 per cent of the total registrations, signalling continued strong demand for housing in the city.

Mumbai's property market has seen a consistent rise in transactions, with property sales exceeding 10,000 units for the first eight months of the year, marking eleven consecutive months of annual growth since August 2023. The city has experienced its best eight-month period, with 96,601 property registrations from January to August 2024, representing a 16 per cent increase during the same period in 2023. *—ANI*

Commonwealth Investment eyes tie-up with T'gana

HYDERABAD , 31 AUG

Rosie Glazebrook, the Chief Executive of the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC), met with Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister of Telangana at the Telangana Secretariat to discuss the trade potential. During the meeting, Glazebrook provided an overview of the CWEIC's initiatives, emphasizing the Council's commitment to enhancing trade and investment among the 56 Commonwealth countries. She also highlighted the Council's particular focus on supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and startups, helping them to scale and achieve sustainable growth.

Expressing the Council's interest in deepening ties with Telangana, Glazebrook proposed that Telangana could serve as a strategic partner in the CWEIC's broader objectives and making it an ideal partner for the Commonwealth's efforts to promote business development. In response, CM Revanth Reddy also shared his vision for the state's development, outlining several flagship programmes, including the RRR (Regional Ring Road), FutureCity, and the Musi River Development Project. These initiatives, aimed at transforming Telangana's urban and economic landscape. *—ANI*

Emami acquires 49.6% stake in Helios Lifestyle

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Home-grown FMCG major Emami on Saturday announced the acquisition of the remaining 49.6 per cent stake in Helios Lifestyle, which owns male grooming brand 'The Man Company'. Helios Lifestyle is already a subsidiary of Emami with 50.4 per cent shareholding, according to a statement from Emami.

"The completion of the acquisition of Helios by Emami will strengthen its presence in the fast-growing digital-first premium male grooming segment," it said. Emami had previously acquired 33.09 per cent equity stake in Helios in two tranches -- one in December 2017 and the other in February 2019. Later, it increased the stake to 50.4 per cent in 2022. The Man Company, a digital-first lifestyle brand, offers premium men's grooming products in categories including fragrances, skin care, hair care, body care and beard management. "The segment offers huge potential for innovation & growth. Emami is already an active player in the male grooming segment through its brand Fair and Handsome," the statement said. According to the Kolkata-headquartered company, Indian male grooming products are rapidly gaining traction, driving impressive market growth. *—PTI*

Centre gives ₹3.66L cr to state governments

Allocation sees a rise of ₹57K cr compared to last yr

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

The Central government has received a total amount of Rs 10,23,406 crore by the end of July 2024 through various tax and non-tax revenues.

According to the report by the Ministry of Finance, the received amount represents 31.9 per cent of the Budget Estimates (BE) for FY 2024-25.

The report by the Ministry, it highlighted that a significant portion of the Tax Revenue collected has been shared with the State Governments. Specifically, Rs 3,66,630 crore has been devolved as the State Governments' share of taxes.

According to the Ministry this is an increase of Rs 57,109 crore compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year. It reflects the fiscal federalism by the government.

The Ministry said " Rs 3,66,630 crore has been transferred to State Governments as Devolution of Share of Taxes by Government of India upto this period which is Rs 57,109 crore higher than the previous year".

Rs 1,25,639 crore has been allocated towards major Subsidies ***PHOTO: PTI***

The receipts of the government are composed of Rs 7,15,224 crore in Tax Revenue (Net to Centre), Rs 3,01,796 crore in Non-Tax Revenue, and Rs 6,386 crore from Non-Debt Capital Receipts.

The Central government on Friday consolidated and published the Monthly Accounts up to July 2024, providing a detailed insight into the financial performance of the government for the current fiscal year.

On the expenditure side, the government has incurred a total expenditure of Rs 13,00,351 crore up to July 2024, which is 27 per cent of the Budget Estimates for the year. Of this, Rs 10,39,091 crore has been spent on the Revenue Account, while Rs 2,61,260 crore has been directed towards Capital Account expenditures.

"Total Expenditure incurred by Government of India is Rs 13,00,351 crore (27.0 per cent of corresponding BE 2024-25), out of which Rs 10,39,091 crore is on Revenue Account and Rs 2,61,260 crore is on Capital Account" the Ministry added.

The Revenue Expenditure, a substantial component of the government's spending, includes Rs 3,27,887 crore earmarked for Interest Payments.

Additionally, Rs 1,25,639 crore has been allocated towards major Subsidies, highlighting the government's effort to support essential sectors and provide relief to vulnerable sections of society through subsidies. *—ANI*

'ELECTION CODE BLAMED'

Slow GDP growth due to lower govt spending: RBI

BHUBANESWAR, 31 AUG

The slowing of India's economic growth to a 15-month low of 6.7 per cent in the April-June quarter was due to "lower" government spending in the wake of the enforcement of the model code of conduct for the recent Lok Sabha polls, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said here on Saturday.

The RBI had projected a growth rate of 7.1 per cent for the April-June quarter of this fiscal.

"The Reserve Bank projected a growth rate of 7.1 per cent for the first quarter. However, the first advance estimation data released by the National Statistical Office showed the growth rate at 6.7 per cent," Das told reporters here.

The components and main drivers responsible for the GDP growth like consumption, investment, manufacturing, services and construction have registered a growth of more than 7 per cent, he said.

Only two aspects have pulled the growth rate slightly down. Those are—government (both central and state) expenditure and agriculture, the RBI governor pointed out.

PHOTO: PTI

He said the government expenditure was low during the first quarter perhaps due to elections (April to June) and operation of model code of conduct by the Election Commission.

Similarly, the agriculture sector has recorded a minimal growth rate of around 2 per cent in the April to June quarter. However, the monsoon was very good and spread all over India except a few areas. So, everyone is optimistic and positive about the agriculture sector, he noted. *—PTI*

UPI likely to grow further: RBI Governor

Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das said he is optimistic that the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) will grow further in several countries. Das, who is on a five-day visit to the state, said UPI is already present in many countries through QR codes and the linkage of fast payment systems, and discussions are underway with several other nations. He said that progress has already been made with countries like Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Singapore, the UAE, Mauritius, Namibia, Peru, France and a few others for acceptance of RuPay cards and payments through the UPI network. *—PTI*

Windfall tax on crude petroleum cut to ₹1,850/T

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

The government has cut windfall tax on domestically-produced crude oil to Rs 1,850 per tonne, from Rs 2,100 per tonne with effect from Saturday.

The tax is levied in the form of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED). The SAED on the export of diesel, petrol and jet fuel or ATF, has been retained at 'nil'.

According to the government order, the new rates are effective from 31 August, an official notification issued late Friday said.

India first imposed windfall profit taxes on 1 July, 2022, joining a host of nations that tax supernormal profits of energy companies. The tax rates are reviewed every fortnight based on average oil prices in the previous two weeks. *—PTI*

STALIN IN USA

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin after signing an MoU between Google and the Tamil Nadu Career Guidance Institute to set up Artificial Intelligence laboratories in the state, in California in USA ***PHOTO: PTI***

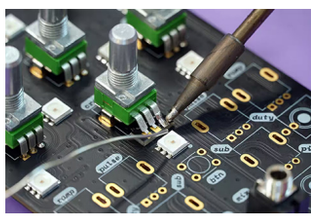


PHOTO: PIXABAY

Electronics 5th largest export commodity: Official

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Electronics has become the country's fifth largest export commodity, growing by 23 per cent annually, a senior official in the Ministry of Electronics and IT said on Friday.

Electronics manufacturing in India has crossed USD 100 billion market in March 2024, which was USD 49 billion in 2017, Bhuvnesh Kumar, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Electronics and IT, said at the launch of indigenously-built Tyronne AMD servers by Netweb Technologies.

"The electronics exports are rapidly growing at rate of 23 per cent annually. Last year we did USD 30 billion of exports from India.

He also expressed confidence that the country's net revenue from electronic exports will become positive in coming years with start of local semiconductor production.

Kumar said the country's trillion dollar digital economy has a component of USD 400 billion from electronics manufacturing and the rest comes from IT related economy. *—PTI*

SEBI revises criteria for entry, exit of stocks in F&O

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Stock market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has updated the eligibility criteria for the entry and exit of stocks in the derivatives segment.

Through a circular issued on 30 August, SEBI announced significant changes to the rules governing the inclusion and removal of stocks in the F&O segment.

"To help develop the securities market while being mindful of these concerns, SEBI vide section 3.1.2 of Chapter 5 of Master Circular on Stock Exchanges and Clearing Corporations, dated 16 October, 2023, has, inter-alia, laid down the eligibility criteria for entry/exit of stocks in derivatives segment," SEBI said.

F&O stands for Futures and Options, refers to financial derivatives that allow traders to speculate on the price movements of an asset without owning the asset itself.

In recent years, the need to revamp the methodology for selecting stocks eligible for Futures and Options (F&O) trading has been a subject of growing concern.

With the evolution of Indian stock markets, the demand for incorporating more stocks with strong liquidity into the F&O segment has intensified. Simultaneously, the necessity to remove underperforming stocks with poor liquidity has become increasingly evident.

Recognizing these concerns, SEBI has took action by updating the eligibility criteria for F&O trading.

PHOTO: PTI

One of the key changes involves the Median Quarter Sigma Order Size (MQSOS) requirement, which has been significantly raised from Rs 25 lakh to Rs 75 lakh. This measure is aimed at ensuring that only stocks with substantial trading volumes are considered for the derivatives segment, thereby enhancing market efficiency.

In addition, the Market Wide Position Limit (MWPL) has been increased from Rs 500 crore to Rs 1,500 crore. This change is expected to accommodate a larger trading capacity for individual stocks, reflecting the growing size and liquidity of the Indian stock market.

Furthermore, as per the SEBI, the Average Daily Delivery Value (ADDV) in the cash market, which is a critical metric for assessing a stock's liquidity, must now be at least Rs 35 crore, up from the previous threshold of Rs 10 crore. This increase is designed to ensure that only stocks with significant trading activity in the cash market are included in the F&O segment. *—ANI*

TN CM visits Apple, MS firms; inks pact with Google

CHENNAI, 31 AUG

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin visited the offices of Apple, Google and Microsoft and discussed opportunities for investment and partnerships with them.

Day 2 of his US visit led to the signing of a pact to skill two million youngsters in the state in AI under the 'Naan Mudhalvan' scheme, in partnership with Google.

The Chief Minister, currently on a visit to the USA to attract investments to Tamil Nadu, on Saturday described the visit to the offices of Apple, Google and Microsoft as "awe-inspiring."

"Discussed various opportunities and exciting partnerships. Determined to strengthen these partnerships and make Tamil Nadu one of the foremost growth engines of Asia!" @TRBRajaa @Guidance_TN @TNIndMin #InvestInTN #ThriveInTN #LeadWithTN #Dravidian Model," Stalin said in a post on the social media platform X.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in the presence of the Chief Minister, with Google for setting up Tamil Nadu AI (Artificial Intelligence) labs in Tamil Nadu.

The initiative will help to collaborate with startups, MSMEs, and the rural economy besides making the youth a future-ready force.

The signing of the pact was the outcome of a discussion initiated by the CM with officials at Google on 30 August, a government release here said.

"The Chief Minister met top officials of Google at Mountain View campus and discussed the further expansion of production of Pixel 8 phones manufactured in Tamil Nadu and the launch of other Google products and technology facilities in Tamil Nadu," the release said.

Stalin also spoke about boosting growth through AI innovations in start-ups, industrial ecosystem mobility and capacity for the future.

The Chief Minister and Minister expressed their appreciation for Apple's contributions and listed various government initiatives designed to enhance the state's manufacturing ecosystem. *—PTI*

Google funds select 4 Indian firms for AI climate research

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Four India-based organisations have been selected among 14 recipients across the Asia Pacific region for grants under the APAC Sustainability Seed Fund 2.0, supported by a USD 5-million grant from Google.org, the tech giant's philanthropic arm.

The fund, managed by Asian Venture Philanthropy Net, aims to foster technology- and AI-driven solutions addressing critical environmental and social challenges. Indian recipients include INREM Foundation, CEPT Research and Development Foundation (CRDF), Institute for Financial Management and Research (WELL Labs), and Gujarat Mahila Housing Sewa Trust (MHT), Google.org said in a statement.

INREM Foundation will develop AI-enabled open digital solutions for community access to water contamination data. CRDF plans to use machine learning and satellite imagery to protect lakes and their carbon sink function. WELL Labs will develop advanced models for village-level water security insights, while MHT will create an AI-powered model to identify urban heat islands and suggest community-centric solutions. This initiative follows Google.org's previous USD 3 million grant to APAC Sustainability Seed Fund 1.0, which supported projects saving over 13 million tonnes of water and mitigating 3,700 tonnes of carbon emissions in India's agriculture sector. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

UP BY 19%

Credit card spending rises to ₹1.7 trillion

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

Indian consumers demonstrated a significant increase in their credit card spending in July this year, marking a 19 per cent increase as compared to the same month last year.

According to a report released by SBI Securities, the total expenditure by credit card users across the country reached an impressive Rs 1.7 trillion. This substantial uptick highlights the growing reliance on credit cards for transactions, reflecting broader economic trends and consumer confidence.

The report also highlighted a considerable increase in transaction volumes, which surged by 39 per cent year-on-year, reaching a total of 38.4 crore transactions in July 2024. This increase in the number of transactions underscores the widespread adoption and usage of credit cards as a preferred payment method among Indian consumers.

HDFC Bank emerged as the leader in terms of transaction volumes, with its credit cards facilitating 9.9 crore transactions ***PHOTO: PTI***

"Credit Card spending in India increased 19 per cent YoY to Rs 1.7 tn in Jul'24. The transaction volume during the month was 38.4 cr, up 39 per cent YoY" said the report.

The report also noted that among the banks, HDFC Bank emerged as the leader in terms of transaction volumes, with its credit cards facilitating 9.9 crore transactions during the month. ICICI Bank followed closely with 7.1 crore transactions, while SBI secured the third position with 6.3 crore transactions.

In terms of transaction value, HDFC Bank with a total spend of Rs 44,369 crore through its credit cards in July. ICICI Bank and SBI followed with Rs 34,566 crore and Rs 26,878 crore, respectively.

The average transaction value also saw a marginal increase of 1.4 per cent month-on-month in July 2024. This marks the first increase in ATV in ten months, suggesting a shift in consumer behaviour towards higher-value transactions. *— ANI*

Rajasthan to establish new industrial park soon

JAIPUR, 31 AUG

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, on Saturday hinted at plans for a new industrial park in the state, following a proposal from Vedanta Industries Chairman Anil Agarwal. He said that the proposed park is set to benefit industries and small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), a key focus of discussions during a recent meeting between Agarwal and the Chief Minister.

The development is expected to significantly enhance Rajasthan's attractiveness as an investment hub and drive economic growth across various sectors. However, the exact location of the park is yet to be disclosed.

It comes in the lead-up to the Rising Rajasthan Summit, aimed at attracting investments and boosting the state's economy.

PHOTO: PTI

The state government plans to send a high-level delegation to all Indian states and 25 countries to promote investment opportunities. Sharma assured that the state will provide all necessary facilities to entrepreneurs, ensuring establishment of industries. *—Agencies*

MANISHA REACHES QFS, DHILLON'S JOURNEY ENDS

Sarita Kumari qualifies for quarterfinals in Archery

PARIS, 31 AUG

The Paris Paralympics have been a rollercoaster of emotions for India's para-badminton players, with Manisha Ramadass advancing to the quarterfinals despite a tough loss, while Tarun Dhillon's campaign came to an end.

In the women's para-badminton singles SU5 Group Stage C, Manisha Ramadass faced a challenging opponent in China's Xia Qiu Yang. Despite her best efforts, Manisha was outplayed, losing the match in straight games, 15-21, 7-21.

However, her earlier performances in the group stage proved strong enough to secure her a spot in the quarterfinals. Finishing second in her group, Manisha will now look to regroup and bring her best game forward as she continues her quest for a medal at the Paralympics. The young Indian shuttler will now focus on refining her strategy and pushing past the competition in the upcoming rounds.

On the other hand, it was a disappointing day for Tarun Dhillon, who participated in the para-badminton men's singles SL4 group stage. Tarun, faced a tough challenge against France's Lucas Mazur. Despite a valiant effort, Tarun was unable to overcome the skillful Frenchman, losing the match 0-2. It was not enough for Tarun to advance further in the tournament. With this loss, his journey at the Paris Paralympics came to a close. —*ANI*

India's para-shuttler Manisha Ramadass **PHOTO: ANI**

Ukrainian Paralympian left warfront to compete in Paris

VILLEPINTE, 31 AUG

Dmytro Melnyk **PHOTO: VAP**

For Ukrainian volleyball player and infantry officer Dmytro Melnyk, coming to Paris to compete at the Paralympic Games has come at a cost. He had to leave behind his platoon of 35 soldiers on the front lines of the war against Russia. Unable to call them for news because "they're in the middle of hell" and unreachable from France, he says all he can do is hope there will still be 35 of them when he gets back. Such is the heart-wrench for Ukraine's delegation of 141 athletes who are trying to remain focused on the chase for medals even as the Russian onslaught on their country means their minds are often elsewhere. Some tell themselves that they are doing their bit for the national cause by keeping Ukraine in the news with their sporting exploits. But it also quickly becomes apparent that the agonies of war came with them in their baggage. —*AP*

Sukant Kadam **PHOTO: ANI**

NiteshKumar **PHOTO: ANI**

Nitesh, Sukant enter singles SL3 and SL4 SFs

PARIS, 31 AUG

Indian shuttlers Nitesh Kumar and Sukant Kadam qualified for the semifinals of men's singles SL3 and SL4 categories respectively after recording straight-game wins in their last group matches in the Paris Paralympics on Saturday. Nitesh, who had won a silver medal in the Asian Para Games last year in China, beat Mongkhon Bunsun of Thailand 21-13 21-14 to notch his third successive win and top group A.

Bunsun also qualified for the semifinals as the second-place finisher from group A.

In SL3 class, which is meant for players with severe lower limb disability competing on half-width court, the top two finishers from each of the two groups qualify for the semifinals.

In the group A, Tokyo Paralympics bronze medallist Manoj Sarkar, who has already bowed out of the tournament, beat Yang Jianyuan of China 21-1 21-11. Manoj had earlier lost to Bunsun and Nitesh.

"I was well prepared for today's game. The first match was much tougher than this. And against him I have played plenty of times and I was very confident. So, I wanted to go one point at a time and then I played really well," said Sukant after the match.

The only win in the mixed doubles came through Nithya Sivan Sumathy and Sivarajan Solaimalai. —*PTI*

MEDAL TALLY

COUNTRIES				
1. China	16	12	6	34
2. GB	8	8	5	21
3. Brazil	6	1	9	16
4. Net	5	2	1	8
20. India	1	1	3	5

NorthEast United FC players celebrate after winning the Durand Cup 2024 in Kolkata on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Durand Cup: North East clinch 1st ever title

KOLKATA, 31 AUG

Goalkeeer Gurmeet Singh pulled off a couple of exceptional saves in the penalty shootout as NorthEast United FC overcame a two-goal deficit to stun Mohun Bagan 4-3 to win their maiden Durand Cup title after the regulation time ended with the score locked at 2-2, here on Saturday.

The 24-year-old judged brilliantly and showed superb footwork to deny Liston Colaco in the third strike, and then in the fifth attempt, he stood like a wall to deny Mohun Bagan captain Subhasish Bose and seal the match in his team's favour.

Guillermo Fernandez, captain Miguel Zabaco Tome, Parthib Gogoi and Alaaeddine Ajaraei struck the other goals in the shootout for NEUFC. Jason Cummings, Manvir Singh and Dimitri Petratos were on the target for the Mariners who had to settle for their 13th runners-up finish in the Asian's oldest tournament that completed its 133rd edition.

For actor John Abraham's team, this was its first ever silverware in a decade after its inception, and it couldn't have been sweeter, coming in front of a full, passionate Mohun Bagan fans at the iconic Salt Lake Stadium.

Mohun Bagan's defence sleeping right after the restart and turned up the heat with two quickfire goals in three minutes. Alaaeddine Ajaraei (55') and second-half substitute Guillermo Fernandez (58') delivered clinical finishes to seize the momentum.

The super sub made a huge impact when he latched onto an Ajaraie cross at the far post and thundered a volley into the top of the net, making it all square with more than half an hour on the clock. —*PTI*

Coco Gauff digs deep to beat Elina Svitolina

NEW YORK, 31 AUG

Coco Gauff was not aware that she'd lost five consecutive matches against opponents ranked in the top 50. She was not sure exactly how many points in a row she'd dropped — 11, it turns out — to give away the first set against Elina Svitolina in the US Open's third round on Friday.

Gauff went back on court and extended the defence of her first Grand Slam title by turning things around to beat the 27th-seeded Svitolina 3-6, 6-3, 6-3. "Felt like a new person coming out," the third-seeded Gauff said. "I just didn't want to leave the court with any regrets."

After making mistake after mistake early on at Arthur Ashe Stadium, Gauff managed to reel off nine of 11 games in one stretch and won again despite losing the opening set, something she did three times en route to claiming the 2023 trophy at Flushing Meadows, including in the final against Aryna Sabalenka.

Gauff will face No. 13 Emma Navarro, one of her teammates at the Paris Olympics, for a berth in the quarterfinals. Navarro eliminated Gauff in the fourth round at Wimbledon. "I did a good job of neutralising her serve and just playing really aggres-sive from the baseline and pushing back against her groundstrokes," Navarro, who is from South Carolina and won an NCAA title for Virginia, said about that matchup last month. —*AP*

ARTHUR ASHE STADIUM | ROUND — 3

ELINA SVITOLINA (27)	6	3	3
COCO GAUFF (3)	3	6	6

My worst tennis ever: Djokovic

NEW YORK, 31 AUG

Novak Djokovic did not go easy on himself when assessing the listless way he performed from the start of the US Open, pointing to his sloppy serving as the main reason the defense of his 2023 title surprisingly ended in the third round. "I have played some of the worst tennis I have ever played," he said. With 14 double-faults, raising his tournament total to 32, Djokovic bowed out with a 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 loss to 28th-seeded Alexei Popyrin of Australia, another shocking result at Flushing Meadows one night after Carlos Alcaraz exited. —*AP*

Bhambri, Bopanna win with respective partners

India's Yuki Bhambri and Albano Olivetti advanced to the men's doubles third round of the US Open with a hard-fought win over 15th seeds Austin Krajicek and Jean-Julien Roger here. The Indo-French pair defeated the USA-Dutch team 4-6 6-3 7-5 in the second round that lasted two hours and five minutes. This is only the second time that Bhambri has reached the third round at a Grand Slam. —*PTI*

Sabalenka wins latest-starting match

Aryna Sabalenka finally got rolling after a bad beginning to the latest-starting match in US Open history, regrouping to beat No. 29 Ekaterina Alexandrova 2-6, 6-1, 6-2 to reach the fourth round. The No. 2 seed didn't get underway until late into the night and had dropped the first set barely a half-hour later. She seized control early in second set, winning 10 straight games to open 5-0 lead in the third. —*AP*

Diksha makes cut in Irish Open with a late birdie

Diksha Dagar **PHOTO: X@SWINGING_SWAMY**

DUBLIN, 31 AUG

A late birdie saved Diksha Dagar on the second day as the Indian golfer made the cut despite a round of 1-over at the KPMG Women's Irish Open here.

The two-time Ladies European Tour winner was one shot short of the cut line when she holed a birdie on the Par-5 17th hole to get to 1-over for the day.

Olympian Diksha who shot 1-under 72 on the first day had two bogeys on the Par-5 fourth and the eighth hole on the front nine on the second day as she turned in 2-over. At that stage she was 1-over for the tournament. The birdie brought her back to even par for the two rounds and she squeezed into weekend action in tied-55th place. Among the other three Indians, Pranavi Urs (73-74) missed by one while Tvesa Malik Sandhu (76-78) and Ridhima Dilawari (79-76) missed the cut by a fair margin. Ursula Wikstrom fired back-to-back rounds of 68 (-5) to lead at the halfway stage.

In a separate event two-time winner on the DP World Tour, India's Shubhankar Sharma moved into the weekend round action at the British Masters despite a closing bogey on Day 2, where he shot an even-par 72. —*PTI*

Brighton hold 10-man Arsenal to 1-1 draw following controversial red card

LONDON, 31 AUG

Brighton took advantage of Declan Rice being sent off early in the second half to rally for a 1-1 draw at Arsenal in the Premier League on Saturday. Arsenal was 1-0 up and looked in control when Rice was shown a second yellow card in the 49th minute, apparently for nudging the ball to the side as Joel Veltman tried to take a quick free kick near the sideline deep inside Brighton's half. Veltman kicked Rice from behind in the process and the home crowd was screaming for the Brighton player to get sanctioned, only for referee Chris Kavanagh to show Rice a red card instead. That turned the game completely and Joao Pedro equalised from a rebound in the 58th after Raya had saved a shot from Yankuba Minteh. —*AP*

EYE ON 2025

Mercedes pick teenager Kimi to replace Hamilton

MONZA, 31 AUG

Teenager Kimi Antonelli has been named as Lewis Hamilton's replacement next year at Mercedes, a day after his Formula One debut ended in the 18-year-old Italian driver hitting the wall.

Antonelli took over for George Russell in the opening practice session for Sunday's Italian Grand Prix at Monza. But his much-anticipated first appearance lasted fewer than two laps, and only 10 minutes, after he lost control of his Mercedes at the Parabolica, sliding backward through the gravel and into the tire barrier.

Team principal Toto Wolff said Saturday the crash would have no impact on Antonelli's F1 chances, and confirmation of his elevation as a junior driver with the team was confirmed ahead of final practice at his home event. "It is an amazing feeling to be announced as a Mercedes works driver alongside George for 2025," Antonelli said in Saturday's announcement. "Reaching F1 is a dream I've had since I was a small boy."

Antonelli has been with Mercedes since he joined its junior program when he was 12. "I want to thank the team for the sup-port they've given me in my career so far and the faith they've shown in me. I am still learning a lot, but I feel ready for the opportunity," said Antonelli, who only turned 18 last Sunday.

After titles in Karting and Formula 4, Antonelli only made the step up to F2 this year, winning two races. There were promis-ing signs for the limited time he was on the track on Friday, with Wolff labelling it "astonishing." But Antonelli was keen to impress, perhaps too keen, and he crashed after seemingly taking too much speed into the final corner of his second lap.

The debutant had just set the fastest middle sector of the session and was looking to reclaim the fastest time from Hamilton, who had just beaten Antonelli's first lap by 0.6 seconds. —*AP*

WHO IS KIMI ANTONELLI

Antonelli will join Mercedes in 2025 alongside George Russell, becoming the youngest driver on the grid. He is the second Prema driver to be promoted this year, after Oliver Bearman who joins Haas.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Age	Hometown	Starts	Wins	Podiums	Poles
18	Bologna, Italy	28	13	17	14

"I'm also really excited to become George's teammate. He came through the team's junior program just like myself and is someone I have a huge amount of respect for

-Kimi Antonelli, Mercedes Benz driver

Kimi Antonelli **PHOTO: X/@MercedesAMGF1**

EPL: Raheem Sterling joins Arsenal on loan

LONDON, 31 AUG

Chelsea winger Raheem Sterling joined local rival Arsenal on a season-long loan deal after a deal sheet was submitted to al-low the English winger's move to go through beyond the transfer deadline. The Premier League summer transfer window closed on Friday, 30 August. But clubs still had two additional hours to complete deals if they had submitted a deal sheet be-fore the 11 pm deadline. The deal sheet is documentation that confirms a deal for a player has been reached before the deadline but requires additional time to be concluded. The club released a statement to confirm the arrival of the 29-year-old winger at the Emirates Stadium, "Raheem Sterling has joined us on a season-long loan from Chelsea. Everyone at Arsenal welcomes Raheem to the club. —*ANI*

Jadeja is a complete all-round fielder: Rhodes

NEW DELHI, 31 AUG

South African cricket legend Jonty Rhodes on Saturday called Ravindra Jadeja a "complete all-round" fielder in the world right now, and also spoke highly about former India player Suresh Raina's abilities on the ground. The 55-year-old Rhodes, regarded as one of the greatest fielders of all time who became the first South African cricketer to take 100 ODI catches, played for the national team from 1992 till 2003. Post retirement, Rhodes became associated with several IPL teams, including Mumbai Indians, Punjab Kings and most recently Lucknow Super Giants, as fielding coach. "I am a big fan of Suresh Raina. I enjoyed his playing days but now he has retired," said Rhodes. —*PTI*

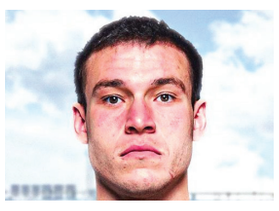


PHOTO: X

ManU complete signing of Manuel Ugarte from PSG

MANCHESTER, 31 AUG

Manchester United confirmed the signing of Manuel Ugarte from Ligue 1 outfit Paris Saint-Germain on a contract that will run until June 2029, with the option to extend for a further year. The club released a statement to confirm the arrival of Uru-guay midfielder, "Manchester United is pleased to confirm that Manuel Ugarte has joined the club, subject to registration. The Uruguay international has signed a contract until June 2029, with the option to extend for a further year." Sky Sports re-ported that Manchester United paid an initial fee of £42m, but the deal could rise to as much as £50.7m, including perfor-mance-related add-ons. —*ANI*

F4 street race: HC allows more time for FIA approval

CHENNAI, 31 AUG

The Madras High Court on Saturday granted time to the organisers of the Formula 4 Street Car Race time till 8 pm today to obtain the FIA approval for the conduct of the event here. The order by a bench of Justices R Suresh Kumar and P B Balaji came on a plea from Racing Promotion Private Ltd. It said FIA (Federation Internationale de l'Automobile) has suggested some changes to a particular corner of the track and work was going and it was expected to be completed by 6 pm. Some works got delayed due to rains on Friday. The petitioner has spent about Rs 200 crore and 5000 tickets have been sold, it said while praying for extension of time. On Friday, the first bench of the HC comprising Acting Chief Justice D Krishnakumar and Justice PB Balaji passed interim orders allowing the Formula 4 car race to be held without disrupting the traffic. —*PTI*